INQnest

■ News / A2
Senate, House kiss and make up

■ Business / B1
GMA 7 shelves IPO due to disagreements

■ Across / A17
Sulu war puts to waste USAID funded projects

■ 2bU!
Your guide to job hunting

Media terror gag may lead to abuses, professor warns

By Lala B. Salaverría and Luige A. del Puerto

"IT WILL be a top military officer for a brown media interview with "Islamic terrorists" may lead to abuses, including the unwarranted branding of people as opponents of violence.

Dr. Mary Racelis, a sociology professor at Ate...

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Filipinos among world's earliest risers, says survey

SINGAPORE — Indonesians, Filipinos and Malaysians are among the earliest risers in the world while many Taiwanese, South Koreans and Hong Kongers are nightowls, according to a global sur...

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Wednesday, March 9, 2005 | 40 pages | vol. 28 | no. 91

website: www.inq7.net

RP No. 2 on Asia graft list

UN body endorses antiterror law for RP

By Veh Contreras, Norman Bordadora, and Lolita B. Salaverría

A DELEGATION from the United Nations has backed the immediate passage of an antiterror law in the country, and said Congress should put enough teeth in the measure to allow the arrest of not only bombers, terrorists or rebels, but also their financiers, investors and suppliers.

Hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs, the team from the office in Vienna of UN Office on Drugs and Crime concluded its workshop on March 4 to help Philippine officials craft an antiterror law that would be "in harmony" with UN Security Council resolutions and other international conventions on terrorism.

The workshop participants formulated recommendations that, among other things, urged lawmakers to make the law applicable to persons engaged in...

LORD, HELP US
President Macapagal-Arroyo looks inspiringly toward heaven before answering a question during Tuesday's press conference at the Malacañang Palace Heraldo Dance Club.

Survey covers 900 foreigners in region

FOREIGN businessmen have ranked the Philippines the second most corrupt country in Asia, according to results of a survey conducted by a Hong Kong-based consultancy group.

Indonesia is ranked the most corrupt country in the region, raising fears about how billions of dollars in loan summits and will end up, the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC) said yesterday.

PERC, which provides advice to companies and governments on how to do business in Asia, polled more than 900 expatriate respondents across the region in January and February.

Across Asia, perceptions of corruption were little better than a decade ago even though governments had lost power in part because of their reputation for nepotism and cronyism and had been replaced by administrations promising whatever governance.

"Many of the same old problems continue," PERC said in the report. "Only the actors have changed."

In the Philippines, a regular bottom-dweller in the survey, "corruption is clearly less today" than it was in the worst days of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was overthrown by a popular revolt in 1986, PERC said.

But it was more difficult to say whether the current administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo "is any cleaner or dirtier"

Gov't may allow logging in Cordillera, says GMA

THE GOVERNMENT is likely to allow logging operations in the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR), President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

"We may need one soon in La Trinidad, Benguet, for jobs like the most logical," the President said when asked whether logging operations would be allowed to resume in CAR.

The other day, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was studying subsidies logging in the CAR would be allowed following the lifting of the log ban in Region 11 (Davao) and Caraga in Mindanao.

In Baguio City, Cordillera forest administrators never divulged even reports that the government may lift the log ban in the CAR, which covers Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga and Mountain Province.

Supporters of slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg have been anticipating against a logging firm operating in Apayao but have been rebuffed by government officials.

Gaston Bumeres, project director of the Ifugao Upland Forest City Movement, said many environmental activities were against a total log ban because it encouraged violators at the expense of indigenous peoples who relied on forest products to survive.

He said the group was campaigning to reforest Ifugao "so long as our indigenous sustainable harvesting activities are allowed to stay on trees the way we know them."

Removing restrictions would "abolish illegal loggers and [command loggers, who violate their franchises, according to Miguel Augustus, chief of a faction of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA).

The CPLA faction has been lobbying for an investigation of logging concessions in Apayao.

More than 80 percent of the Cordillera are classified as forest land, although the latest report of the Cordillera Regional Development Council notes that old forest growth in the region had been reduced to one percent of the forest cover.

In the Senate, Sen. Jamby Madrigal yesterday urged the...

Survey covers 900 foreigners in region

FOREIGN businessmen have ranked the Philippines the second most corrupt country in Asia, according to results of a survey conducted by a Hong Kong-based consultancy group.

Indonesia is ranked the most corrupt country in the region, raising fears about how billions of dollars in loan summits and will end up, the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC) said yesterday.

PERC, which provides advice to companies and governments on how to do business in Asia, polled more than 900 expatriate respondents across the region in January and February.

Across Asia, perceptions of corruption were little better than a decade ago even though governments had lost power in part because of their reputation for nepotism and cronyism and had been replaced by administrations promising whatever governance.

"Many of the same old problems continue," PERC said in the report. "Only the actors have changed."

In the Philippines, a regular bottom-dweller in the survey, "corruption is clearly less today" than it was in the worst days of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was overthrown by a popular revolt in 1986, PERC said.

But it was more difficult to say whether the current administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo "is any cleaner or dirtier"

Women hold global march for equal rights

PARIS — Women's groups yesterday embarked on a global march to demand rights and the observance of international Women's Day amid fresh reports that painted a grim picture of their plight in many parts of the world.

The mobilization for a charter for equal rights got under way in San Paulo, Brazil, and will come to an end in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in October after passing through over 60 countries in between.

The Women's Global Charter for Humanity was adopted last December by women's rights groups in Egypt, the Rwandan capital.

Organizers expect 30,000 women to attend Tuesday's start of the tour. Ouagadougou, the Burkina Faso capital, was chosen as the final destination because of its poverty and low level of protection for women.

The charter proposes "to build another world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and racism...

SUMMER BEAUTIES. Five of 23 contestants in the Binibining Pilipinas 2005 tilt smile, strut and more during their Tuesday presentations to the media at the Araneta Coliseum. Three winners will represent the country in the Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss International pageants.

MILITANT women and policemen face off near Malacañang in a protest rally marking International Women's Day. The marchers support a House measure to reproductive health that the Church opposes.

Ignore Church, militant women ask lawmakers

PROGRESSIVE women's groups yesterday said the observance of International Women's Day should be the catchers' beat which is defined by reproductive health bill and the Department of Health's "Lipat Bahay" program against attacks by the Catholic Church.

Marching from the Bandigan house building to the House of Representatives in Quezon City, members of Pilahi, Makabayan and Liktaas called on lawmakers to ignore the stand of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines against the proposed Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act (House Bill No. 3773).

In Justice Bridges' executive director of Liktaas, said the bishops' line of the bishops' opposition was that "they would rather that women die from unplanned pregnancies."

"Women's lives are put at risk because of the many complications that can arise during their pregnancy and delivery. It is poor women who face much greater risk and the ones who are dying. The sad thing is that all these deaths can be prevented," Bridges said.

Liktaas is a center for women's health economics. Pilahi and Makabaya are federations of urban poor women and youth.

Members of the party-list group Gabriela and Women Image and workers belonging to the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino-Kilusang Mayo Uno massed in protest in front of the House, pushing for the passage of HB 3773.

Elsewhere, other women's groups took to the streets to call on the government for suppressing their reproductive and other rights.

At the House, Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales said clergymen opposed to HB 3773 had actually failed to read the measure.

"Can't they read? They were the ones who said we're legalizing abortion, which is not found in the bill," said the party-list representative. "If they claim to be pro-life, why are they barring priests from marrying?"

Rosales said she and Representatives Janet Garin and Dr. Teresa Antonio-Custodio would...

WEATHER FORECAST

CEBUCOR: Fewer rain showers including Easter all over country, mostly clear with scattered rainshowers and cloudy Thursday to Friday. It is cooler all over partly cloudy to at times cloudy with scattered rainshowers or thunderstorms.
ACCU-Weather

Senate, House agree to end bickering

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

AFTER days of trading barbs, leading members of the Senate and the House of Representatives led by Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentabella agreed Monday night to end the hostilities that virtually placed both chambers at a standstill.

At a meeting held over dinner at Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City, House members agreed to kiss and make up with their counterparts in the Senate, for the issue that started it all—the re-enacted bank-related allocations in the 2005 national budget—was not discussed.

"We recognize that there were no winners in this word war, and the answer we ended it, and worked on, word-constructive dialogue, the better for both chambers and the country," said Pangilinan in a phone interview Monday night.

Pangilinan said park was not served during dinner, but "mostly fish," in an apparent reference to the controversial park barrel funds, a known source of kickbacks for lawmakers. "It was a Japanese restaurant, so [we] ate fish. But nothing fishy," he added.

Pangilinan was dispatched by Senate President Franklin Drilon to meet with the congressmen since Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate finance committee, who was in Binondoon, would not make it.

Fuentabella, the House deputy majority leader, was met with Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar and Representation Leaders Locsin, Benedicto Jumoro, Antonio Roman, Jose Solis, Eduardo Zarzosa, Prospero Pichay and Arthur Defensor.

Pangilinan said the park barrel was not discussed at all, although he hinted that the message was clear the House was hurting from the sudden decision of the Senate to approve the P600.6-billion national budget in toto.

But he refused to say if the lawmakers issued a veiled warning against the Senate not to get to the way mid-time.

"We agreed to maintain an open and healthy communication line," said Pangilinan, noting that Zarzosa had suggested that he and House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles meet more frequently.

"We've done that before, so I am nothing wrong with that," said the senator when asked whether the upper chamber had given him blanket authority to agree to the harmony proposal.

Pangilinan said the meeting had the groundwork for an "expanded meeting" in which Drilon and Speaker Jose de Venecia could sit down to establish inter-chamber cooperation and meetings.

Locsin confirmed Pangilinan's account, stressing the meeting.

He told the reporters that House members had relayed to the Senate, through Pangilinan, that it had been stripped of the measure to access some of pleasing to restore the full amount of their pork barrel through the bicameral conference committee.

"The issue is dead, lessons to the ground. It is already from euthanasia," said Locsin.

He said the senators' claim that they were afraid the House might just opt for a truncated budget and disagreed.

Villar earlier accused the House of deliberately delaying the approval of the 2005 budget in order to pave the way for a truncated budget as the park barrel of the congressmen would remain intact. He noted that while the Senate had already appointed its representatives to the bicam, the House had yet to do so.

"If they are always afraid of that, then they should not question anymore (the budget). Why did it take them three weeks to do so? On the first day they should have announced, 'we accept it,'" said Locsin.

The Senate approved the House-approved version of the 2005 budget which contained the lower park barrel amounts allegedly to bail the congressmen's plan to restore the full amounts during the bicam.

Locsin maintained that the real story was not about park barrel, as the threat of a truncated budget, but "with what they (senators) say at the nationwide accusation of Sen. Ping Lacson on padding the park barrel funds of senators by P1.3 billion.

Ocial Dimplimot, if you have problem with Ping, you take care of it yourselves but don't go blaming other people. Don't drag in the House," he said.

PROJECT BLUE SHENES
Inquirer Chair Marixi R. Prieto delivers her message as Philippine Business for Social Progress trustee at the signing of the Citigroup Project B.L.U.E. (Buildings for Literacy, Understanding and Education) memorandum of agreement with the Department of Education yesterday in Makati City. Looking on are, from left, Citigroup corporate affairs head Gilberto Chan Jr., Inquirer School program director Aurora Fellacuin and Citigroup country officer James Hunt.
ALVIN MARIÑO

GMA displeased by Senate rejection of VAT rate hike

By Edu C. Catacutan Jr.
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was visibly displeased yesterday over the rejection by the Senate-wide and senate-committee of her proposal to increase the value-added tax rate to 12 percent.

"This is a work in progress," said the President on the occasion that she was hosting for award to the International conference outlining men's morning to hammer out a final version of the EW inherited bill.

"I maintain the faith that Congress will come out with a bill law that will signal to the world that we have turned the corner," the senator said at a press briefing at a World Bank forum in Davao City (See related story below.)

"We heard the World Bank express the concerns of the international community—they want a bill that is high-quality with revenue higher rates, wider coverage and easier to administer," she said.

The frozen version of the bill hewed to the original proposal of the President who is targeting at least P60 billion in new revenues to enable her to reduce the budget deficit to zero within the next six years. She said she was counting on the increased VAT to stabilize the bulk of these revenues.

The Senate ways and means committee opted to maintain the VAT at the present 10 percent. Sen. Ralph Recto, the committee chair, claimed that lifting the VAT exemptions on fuel, power and professionals alone would yield 66.4 billion in new revenues, or better than the P55.1.21 billion target of the House version.

Recto said the Senate version of the VAT reform bill sought to mitigate the effect of the VAT on consumers by widening the excise and franchise taxes on petroleum and power utilities and by raising the corporate income tax.

He said the prices of diesel and power would go up by 2 per cent and the consumer price index, respectively, under the 2-percentage point increase in the Malacañang and House versions.

He argued that with the retention of the 10 percent VAT rate and the lifting of exemptions, there would be a "lower" hike of 68 cents per liter in diesel prices and 46 to 50 centavos per kWh of power.

Recto said the Malacañang and House versions of the VAT reform bill would also result in higher inflation than his committee's version.

The inflationary pressure of a 12 percent VAT rate is four times more than our proposal in the House," Recto told reporters.

The Senate ways-and-means opened five debates on the Recto committee report to stay ahead of the House 14 Lower house of Congress.

Senate President Franklin Drilon called a caucus of Senate majority yesterday to come up with a "common position" on the Recto report and to address concerns on the measure's chief snack to approval.

But no consensus was reached during the caucus, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said.

On Women's Day, Miriam raps gender bias

SORRY but, Miriam Defensor Santiago marked International Women's Day yesterday with a characterization of the all-male Senate as "government."

"I bet you would never become female president was proof that women continue to suffer from gender bias, the senator-senator said.

"I bet you would have no heard of women topping the bar and other competitive examinations, and graduating summa and magna cum laude from our universities? Do you many women have been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, female president, speaker of the House or Ombudsman?"

"Zero!" said Santiago, answering her own question.

In a statement, Santiago said women are relegated to second-level career positions and denied access to power structures and positions of leadership in government.

"The proverbial glass ceiling still exists. The message that the system is telling us is clear—women can only fill certain positions in government and no higher," she said.

She said that the highest office in the land is occupied by a woman is the exception rather than the norm, according to her.

Santiago noted that while women comprised 50 percent of the 1.46 million government employees, many hold the bulk of key appointive positions while women were relegated to lower positions that did not involve policy-making.

The country is women's issues like reproductive health, gender-based violence and discrimination being relegated to the sidelines in government policy-making, she said.

Santiago said the situation in Iraq was no better, with only four of 25 senators being women.

"I will probably never be elected Senate president because of my sex, but neither will I become chief justice because I am not a member of the Iraqi bar," quipped Santiago, a former Supreme Court judge and Cabinet secretary who nearly won the presidency in 1992.

Santiago noted that there were only 38 women representatives among the 212 regular members of the House and three of 20 party-list representatives.

Because of the low representation of women in Congress, not enough gender-responsive laws have been enacted, the senator said.
Juliet Labog-Javellana

Singapore Airlines

Travel Log

SPECIAL AIRFARES AND TOUR PACKAGES
UNTIL MARCH 2005

SINGAPORE	KUALA LUMPUR	BANGKOK & SINGAPORE	BALI	AUSTRALIA
from US$308	from US$388	from US$408	from US$418	from US$678
4D/3N Legit land accommodation	4D/3N Legit land accommodation	8D/7N Angkor land accommodation	4D/3N Legit land accommodation	8D/7N Legit land accommodation

AUSTRALIA	LOS ANGELES/ SAN FRANCISCO	EUROPE	LOS ANGELES	NEW YORK
from US$548	from US$798	from US$898	from US$1,158 (via Cancun, Summer Time)	from US$1,368 (via Cancun Economy Class)

Book and buy ONLINE at www.singaporeair.com/ph

A GREAT WAY TO FLY

Gloria vows no more borrowing to stem gov't budget deficit

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday reiterated the government would no longer rely on borrowings to help stem its huge deficit problem.

The President made the announcement the World Bank 2005 Philippine Development Forum in Davao City declining to comment on the recommendation of the Bush administration to slash the United States' aid package to the Philippines next year.

"We are really grateful for our official (bilateral and multilateral partners, but rather than increase your borrowings), what we really want to do is consolidate and prioritize our borrowings," Ms. Arroyo said.

World Bank country director for the Philippines Joachim Von Amsberg said multilateral donors would raise development assistance to the Philippines if the government speeded up its fiscal reform program.

"Several of the larger official development assistance (ODA) partners indicated their willingness to go beyond current programs and consider substantially increased financial commitments if and when the country established a track record of significant and sustained fiscal reforms," Von Amsberg said.

He did not cite actual figures.

Donor agencies have long welcomed the passage of two key tax measures backed by Ms. Arroyo and blame their support behind what they said was a "high-quality" bill raising the value-added tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent, Von Amsberg said.

The "high-quality" bill refers to the tax rate and widen the tax base, while keeping key administration simple.

However, there was a strong view that additional tax revenues would be needed in an effort to reduce the deficit, Von Amsberg said.

The VAT bill is among several measures the President is pushing for passage in Congress in a bid to generate additional revenues to help pay off huge debts and keep the budget deficit at manageable levels.

The budget deficit hit P145 billion in January and is on track to be within the target ceiling for the first three months of the year, the finance department said earlier.

The figure is about 21 percent of the P71.6-billion ceiling for the first quarter.

Last year, the government posted a budget deficit of P146.1 billion or 3.9 percent of the gross domestic product.
With AFP

Prices of goods stable, says Noli

THE PRICES of basic commodities have remained stable despite the fuel price increases and the threat by Congress to expand the value-added tax and lift the restrictions on private goods and services, Vice President Noli de Castro said yesterday.

In his report to President Macapagal-Arroyo and members of her Cabinet during the Eastern Mindanao Development Authority meeting in Davao City yesterday, De Castro, presidential adviser on price monitoring, said the increase in the prices of other goods was still "not radical" and will "within foreseeable ranges."

De Castro, in his report, said the National Price Coordinating Council, which he heads, held two major meetings with industry players this year—on Jan. 9 and on Feb. 28.

During the first meeting, he can manufacturers said that because of anticipated increases in world market prices, they were forced to increase local prices by 3 percent, which just would translate to the retail price of canned goods.

De Castro said the increase in canned goods could have been imposed last Christmas but our representatives of the in our and food processing companies agreed to seek other options, such as sea-lane bags shipping expenses, to hold back increases.
Cynthia Balana

METRO

EZ2 SUERTRES SIX DIGIT 6/42 Lucky Vis-Min SWEEPSTAKES

1 7 1 8 4 6 2 0 0 4 5 4 4 19 18 31 33 41 2 8 4 5 8 2 5

P17,073,417.90 P100,000.00

Transport groups want one-time, big price increase

By Abigail L. Ho

STOP killing us softly.

That was the appeal of an alliance of public transport groups which is urging oil firms to just implement one, big price hike instead of small but frequent increases.

But the request of the Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines (Altodap) ran against a Malacañang order that will put a 55-centavo cap on current week-to-week price hikes.

Yesterday, oil firms have told Malacañang that they would be raising pump prices by an average of P2.50 per liter this month.

Altodap president Boy Vargas said it's a feeling yesterday with the Government Oil Price Watch that they would rather be shocked by one, big price hike than be surprised by small price increases every week.

Vargas explained it would be easier for them to budget their expenses and plan ahead if they immediately know how much oil firms would be adjusting their prices.

"We want to know why they implement small increases every week when they can just take prices one-time by a big amount. It's so difficult to keep guessing all the time," he said.

The Department of Energy earlier appealed to local oil companies to implement staggered price hikes to ease the impact on motorists.

More difficult

But Vargas said the small and frequent oil price hikes were making life more difficult for the public transport sector.

Besides, he added, there is a lack of transparency on the part of oil firms, which is making it more difficult for the public and private motorists to determine whether they were buying overpriced petroleum products.

This prompted Efren de Luna, president of the Philippine Line Federation of Drivers Organizations/Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators, to open their books to the Transport sector.

"There has to be transparency," he said.

Consumer advocate Raul Concepcion, through his Consumer and Oil Price Watch, expressed the same appeal to oil firms.

Concepcion also agreed that the transport groups' clamors were valid, he did not call for the opening of the oil firms' books.

Instead, he said, the DOE should apply a better oil price monitoring system to prevent oil companies from overcharging their customers.

Oil companies have said the 21-centavo jump in oil prices from the end of January to the end of February wouldn't translate to an average of P0.50 increase in pump prices this month.

Consumer deemed the amount being claimed by oil firms but did not say how much the shortfall should be. With a report from Gil Cabacungan

MAN OF STEEL
Laborers work on the controversial statue of Lapu-Lapu while residents in Lawaan avoid persons from that area.

Roldan seeks case transfer

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE PASIG City Regional Trial Court branch which will hear his case has not yet scheduled the assignment of cases and hearing arraignment, Teresita Roldan, who had been linked to the abduction of a Chinese Filipino businessman, is a session filed yesterday—a day after his case was filed still at the Pasig City RTC Branch 265.—Roldan immediately asked the court to suspend the proceedings and bring his case back to the Department of Justice.

Roldan also asked the court to withhold the issuance of the arrest warrant against him.

The arrest, whose real name is Michel Yap Gomatoc, is the alleged mastermind in the kidnapping of a three-year-old boy last month.

His group allegedly asked the family for P500 million in ransom.

It came too late

Roldan's lawyers attempted to file their motion right after the case was raffled the other day, but the lawyer supposed to file the case came in late, and court employees were already about to go home.

In his "urgent motion for preliminary investigation and to suspend the proceedings" filed yesterday afternoon, Roldan asked that his case be brought back to the National Prosecution Service, adding that the Justice department should first conduct a preliminary investigation on his case.

State prosecutors and Roldan had waived the right to a preliminary investigation by not filing a counter-affidavit before the State Prosecutor can assume the allegations.

But in their urgent motion, Roldan's lawyers said the "cumulative facts" in filing the information without a preliminary investigation was "a travesty of his constitutional right to due process."

The area is the first of eight suspects who had been charged in the kidnap.

Two of the suspects had named him as their leader.

Gonzalez puts a stop to nighttime, warrantless arrests

By Armand N. Nocum

A CALL from a former colleague in Congress prompted Senate Majority Leader Francisco "Kit" Gonzalez to order Philippine National Police (PNP) to stop warrantless arrests and nighttime searches of certain suspects.

"I was directed to cease and desist from arresting such suspects without proper warrant during nighttime operations," Gonzalez said in a memorandum to NEGRO Director Reynaldo Wycoco and Caviar Bulfodo, Inspector director of the NEGRO office in Cebu City.

According to Gonzalez, nighttime arrests can only be done if NBI men are arresting fugitives from justice, escaped prisoners, and those who are caught in accordance with the principle of hot pursuit.

Lastly, instructed, warrantless arrests can be done if there is strong evidence that a crime has been committed or is about to be committed.

These types of arrest are also applicable if the crime is serious and there are strong reasons to believe that the suspect or suspects must be neutralized in order to maintain the peace and order in the community especially crimes against national security.

"Should it be necessary to effect arrest in accordance with any of the foregoing situations, you should immediately request for an inquest prosecutor to conduct inquest proceeding and inform the arrested persons who will undergo medical examination of his/her continued of detainment," Gonzalez said.

Salon from the 'North'

Gonzalez, a three-term congressman and former deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, said a call from a colleague from the "North," whom he did not identify, convinced him that there should be some sort of regulation in instances involving NBI agents.

According to him, the congressman had complained that NBI men arrested his daughter at 11 p.m. last week when she was on a motorbike driven by her husband on The Fort in Taguig.

They were reported to be in the company of other motorcycle enthusiasts.

The NBI men, he said, were claiming that the motorcycles had "questionable papers" and could have been smuggled into the country.

They were then asked to accompany the NBI men in front of the for questioning.

Gonzalez said it was at this point that the daughter called her father, who then called the justice secretary.

He said he would have let the matter go had not a barangay official in Iloilo called him last Thursday to say that he was concerned for questioning by NBI agents in about the same time.

Gonzalez said the arrest was wrong because it was unfair and unjust to people suspected of committing crimes.

In the case of this night, he said they could not get lawyers and and have inquest fiscal to attend to them.

"This is a big opening for abuse if not properly guided," he said, recalling that even during martial law, there was a policy that no arrest could be made in the wee hours at night or weekends.

Atienza takes on Lagman

By Tina G. Santos

TAKING up the cudgels for Catholic bishops, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has accepted the challenge of Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman for a public debate on the population issue.

Atienza, founder of Pro-Life Philippines, said Lagman should direct it not challenging the bishops but the government to answer his fellow politician like him.

"The church should not debate with politicians. Politicians should debate among themselves," the mayor said in a statement. "As a people human with specific rules and regulations, I am willing to have a public debate with him (Lagman)."

Lagman earlier challenged Catholic bishops to a debate on House Bill 3773 or the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act of 2005, which he claimed would define the government's family planning policy and implement programs to address overpopulation.

But Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles described the challenge as a publicity stunt of a street thug.

Meanwhile, militant women's groups supported the bill for its liberal stance and the immediate enactment of RH 3773 saying the state, church or society should not put pressure on them and instead allow them to decide for themselves.

WOMEN'S DAY EXHIBIT
Lea Pinas Rep. Cynthia Villar, president of the Lady Legislators of the 13th Congress, leads fellow women lawmakers in opening a photo exhibit marking 100 years of the feminist movement in the Philippines at the House of Representatives.

NBI agent to testify in Aussie trial of Pinoy

By Marjorie C. Ortiz

A NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agent is scheduled to testify in an Australian court next week for a Filipino accused of murdering a Tongan in 2002.

Eduardo Amanda Jr. of the NBI International Service is set to testify in Secondary after the New South Wales Supreme Court summoned him to give his testimony as the agent handling Angelito Almeda's case.

2002 killing

A native of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Almeda, 41, was accused of killing fellow shoreman, Tony worker Polutemoko Tevaki on Dec. 16, 2002.

Almeda surrendered to the NBI in May 2004 and said he would defend himself but pleaded not guilty to the murder charge.

Almeda's ex-worker Perfecto Tinsia, who was arrested, two months after the crime, confessed to the murder and hiding the victim's body parts in a nearby mountain.

Prior to his extradition in June 2004, Almeda told the NBI agents that it was Tinsia who killed the Tongan in a brawl inside the accused's house in New South Wales.

Almeda, who suffers from a physical disability said it was impossible for him to have committed the grisly murder.

METROBRIEFS

War vs billboards

IN MANILA continuing war against illegal billboards, the councilors have reached double digits. Some 50 councilors have been demanded since the city banned illegal billboards. Ex-Manila city government reported yesterday. The billboards did not endanger quality lives and should be removed because of posing risks to motorists and the public. (Rubin Mayor Jayson Binay said. Eight boards had collapsed and damaged property along major roads in the past 10 months and were struck by an Isuzu Avenue, C-5 road, Libis, President Sergio Osmeña Avenue (formerly South Super Highway), Makati Avenue, and the Guadalupe EDSA station. The City Engineer's Office of Manila counted some 70 billboards without permits on these major roads. But 19 have been removed, while 17 are up for demolition. Jaime F. Balboa

Parish robbery

THE PARISH priest of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Church on F.B. Harrison Street in Pasay City was robbed of seven air-conditioning units, two water pumps, a two-horsepower motor, and three solenoid base by still unidentified robbers, police said. Fr. Reynaldo Montealto, association director of the church said he told Pasay police yesterday morning after he discovered that the equipment was missing from the former parish convent across the church. The stolen equipment was worth P250,000, the priest said. Jocelyn R. Uy

Cantoso new

SACHZNA a the Lakandula High School in Tondo, Manila who had petitioned against the privatization of their canteen have suffered a setback in their fight over the concessionaire after a Pasay City judge issued a 20-day temporary restraining order in favor of the private concessionaires. Judge Rhodin Tijana of the Pasay Regional Trial Court yesterday ordered Education Undersecretary Jesus Luis Martin Sescon, Manila District Schools Superintendent Dr. Ma. Lolita Sobrevinas, and Lakandula High School principal Ms. Isabelita Castillo to refrain from enforcing an order preventing private concessionaires Mariveles Private from operating the canteen. Sescon earlier ordered the turnover of the canteen's operations to Lakandula's Parent-Teachers-Community Association, which is the mother's cooperative and reorganized. Tina G. Santos

PNP on alert

ARF ERBA: Cagayan Region Police Director Rodolfo Crisostomo Arevalo yesterday urged all district directors to continue to be on alert after receiving information about new terrorist attacks threats, particularly in the city of Manila. The order was issued a day after Manila police director Rodolfo Crisostomo Arevalo ordered the downgrading of the full-alert status to a lack-to-normal condition. "Although the information is being verified, we want our units to be prepared to avoid more bombings," Police said. Safety measures like increased police visibility was also given emphasis by the police. Alexis C. Corrupal

RMN's 62 meet

MEMBERS of Class '62 of the Radio Mindanao Network (RMN) in Cagayan de Oro, Manila, will hold a meeting on Sunday, 2 p.m. at Rainer's Bar and Restaurant, 1115-1121 M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila. For details, contact Atty. Gumaldo Pangasinan, 5213439 (c/o Leah); Mercy Barrameda, 8902622, 8915041; Lily Pantoja, 7410981, 8911-7306960; Rudy Ong, 09189080007; or Rosalinda Domingo-Reyes, 5213439, 0917-6286170. Carmen Trinidad-Gomez, 1506666.

UN body endorses antiterror law for RP

Front page A1 »

"precautionary acts" to terrorism.

The IRR released the list of recommendations yesterday to the media, saying: "The Philippines plays an important role in the world's antiterrorism campaign."

According to one recommendation, "terrorist acts or related to financing, planning, preparation of terrorist acts or supporting terrorists, recruitment of members of terrorist groups, supply of weapons, etc." should be outlawed.

Another recommendation reads: "Terrorism is of vital national and international concern, which requires the immediate enactment of adequate laws to all countries."

There are 30 draft antiterror bills pending in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Philippines chairs the newly formed UNSC Resolution No. 1566 committee, which deals with terrorist groups and individuals outside the Al-Qaida and Taliban grouping, and also heads the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Counter-Terrorism Task Force, the IRR said.

Hearing Chair Arlene Calida called the IRR-led workshop anew. Sen. Simeon Datumanong, chair of the Senate committee on justice, and representatives of the Justice Department, Anti-Money Laundering Council and Office of the Ombudsman also attended.

Barangay registration

The government has been pushing for the establishment of a national identification system to go with the passage of an antiterror law.

Toward this end, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday said the mayors of Metro Manila had adopted the proposal that each resident in every barangay be registered.

Boy Negro stops singing

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE CANARY has stopped singing.

After initially cooperating with the police, bombing suspect Ismail Bantuli, alias Boy Negro, has apparently decided to keep his mouth shut.

"He has stopped cooperating with the police," a senior intelligence officer told the Inquirer.

"After he was captured, he was talking to us freely. He even talked to the media ... But he won't tell us [Bantuli's] purpose."

Asked why, the official said a lawyer had since likely advised Bantuli against talking further to investigators.

Bantuli, who surrendered last week, had said in media interviews that he was the one who supplied the explosives used in the Valentine's Day bombing of a passenger bus in Makati City that killed eight people and wounded more than 100.

Police alleged the 24-year-old suspect was a member of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group under commander Mike Jeldanes, which had claimed responsibility for the Feb. 14 bombings, not only in Makati but in General Santos and Davao as well.

The officials said intelligence authorities had wanted more "tactical information" from Bantuli, including where he stayed in Metro Manila and who his contacts were.

The officials said intelligence operatives were monitoring other suspected Abu Sayyaf members in the metropolis, including "Bulik Islam" or Muslim converts.

Police earlier said they were hunting at least one more terrorist still, composed of three to four persons, in Metro Manila.

Two other men linked by the police to the Makati bombing and whose bail-set allegedly supplied with explosives—Gafiul "Tapay" Sahanan and Angelo Trinidad, alias Abu Ghali Trinidad—are also detained.

A police document said Sahanan left was recruited by Sahanan in 2003 and started training in June 2004 on "guerrilla, in encounter and explosives course (Isa) three months."

"As soon as possible," Interpol officials will do the rounds of Metro Manila communities to collect the residents' personal data, including complete name, address, place and date of birth, gender, civil status and occupation, Reyes said.

The registration for members initially will have three photocopies of data from the civil, domic, dossing of the database of immunities, and retention of a registration number to each resident.

Reyes said he and the mayors had agreed that operational details—such as the age at which residents would be obliged to register—would be issued out in other meetings.

The collection of residents' records is mandated in Section 394 of the local government Code (LGC) of 1991 and just needs strict enforcement by local officials, Reyes said.

The records will form part of the database of a national ID system, he said, adding:

"We are in the process of coming up with a draft [memorandum] that will require local government units to implement the provisions of the LGC."

"[Barangay officials] will be tasking the law if they don't comply with the provision."

'It will stand'

According to Reyes, further legislation was unnecessary as far as the barangay ID scheme was concerned because the LGC already provides for it.

Asked if the barangay registration would serve the purpose of controlling crime and terror executions without a national ID system, he said: "Yes, it is still good."

Reyes addressed the "terrors" problem by saying that in lieu of ID cards, residents would be assigned numbers.

He said the barangays would collate the data in their computers.

In the absence of a computer in a barangay, the local government unit will provide one. "That will only be [roughly] P25,000," he said.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, chair of the Metro Manila Mayors League, said the barangay registrations would be implemented in all areas of the metropolis.

He said this would "form the basis of the city's ID."

But nongovernment organizations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations believe that equal focus on responsive laws civil society is a potent force that can play a big part in resolving—and preventing—armed conflict.

Members of the Asean NGOs met in Manila for the conference of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), which started yesterday.

The GPPAC aims to discuss ways to strengthen the relationship between civil society, the government and the United Nations with regard to conflict prevention and peace-building.

"Any conflict in this world can no longer be resolved by any one actor. There must be a partnership between the government and the people, and that's what we are trying to do," said Cecilio, executive director of the Initiatives for International Dialogue, the GPPAC initiator.

Michel said that the best way to cover bad sponsored adverse effects in Southeast Asia, thus the need for Asean countries to do, was ways to address the matter.

He cited as an example the organization's efforts to prevent the clashes between government troops and separatist rebels, which had displaced thousands of civilians.

Out of the box

Benjamin Ajodon III, Mary Racelis, a member of the panel on UN civil society relations and a sociology professor at Ateneo de Manila University, said civil society was important because it could get people to consider conflicts without resorting to violence.

He said that instead of using fear to terrorism and imposing solutions to problems, NGOs were resorting to discussion, debate and other alternative ways of appealing to reason to resolve issues.

"We've heard of the very thinking out of the box," Racelis said, "to solve civil societies, especially the NGOs," Racelis said.

She said this was especially important because, she pointed out, the dimensions of warfare today had changed and people must find creative ways to deal with it.

Racelis also said it had been acknowledged that the violation of human rights here was no longer a side effect of warfare but its core.

This was different from the situation during World War I, when soldiers from civilians were interested, or in World War II, when an equal number of soldiers and civilians were affected, she said.

Giving voice to victims

Racelis said NGOs had been able to provide checks and balance by giving voice to the excluded members of the community, like women and children.

"The most traumatized by conflicts often do not have a say [in things]," she said, adding that NGOs were also a form of empowerment because they had allowed people to organize themselves for a common goal.

Racelis also cited the importance of a global network of NGOs. "The values that go with global civil society is democratization and the global rule of law," she said, adding that global governance must had likewise made leaders more accountable to the international community for their actions.

The GPPAC will also hold dialogues with CSO representatives and Asean officials in the coming years.

The conference delegates will come from Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam, East Timor, the United States, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands and the Philippines.

Media terror gag may ...

Front page A1 »

ines de Manila University and a member of a United Nations panel on civil society relations, raised the concern yesterday as retired Navy Chief of Staff Gen. Efraim Abu publicly declared himself free from the controversial proposal.

"That's a legitimate concern of the military but rules decides, what's the criteria [for being reported as a terrorist]?" Bantuli asked. "It can easily be abused, even though that's not the intention. That's the danger."

Bantuli cited the case in the Internet where asked about military apprehension that terror groups might use the media as a vehicle for propaganda.

"On one hand, we don't want to encourage the killing of innocents," Bantuli said. "At the same time, we have to respect the country right for democracy."

Speaking on the sidelines of an international conference on Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Bantuli said she did not believe media should be regulated.

"But it should act its own standards and police itself," she added.

Aware of responsibilities

She said most media outfits were sensitive to people with their own interests to advance or protect, and they must not forget to take stock of what their actions and reports project.

According to Bantuli, most civil societies feel that the media are not giving enough attention to issues than the nongovernmental organizations are concerned with.

She noted that the issue of terrorism seemed to dominate most media discussions when the issue might have deeper roots, like poverty, which were not being brought up.

Bantuli said that when it came to deciding whether to support exclusion on media or not, civil society would likely side with the media and publish opinions.

'That's Adan's own'

General Abu said reporters the views expressed by Adan were his deputy's own and not necessarily that of the AFP.

"We do not have a stand on that yet. That is the personal position of General Adan," Abu said.

Asked what he thought of Adan's proposal, Abu said: "I don't think about it ... I'm more concerned about my role as chief of staff and how to fight the insurgents. Things like this, I leave that to other people."

In Congress' hands

Abu said reporters should have nothing to worry about, adding that what was important was what people were talking about in Congress.

In the end, it is all up to Congress to decide on the matter, he said.

"This issue is being carefully talked about. We also balance press freedom and concerns of national security," he said.

Speaking on radio DZMM yesterday, Adan said the issue was not press freedom "but more [of] media responsibility."

"What is happening is that some media have become virtual mouthpieces of terrorist groups," he said.

"Deliberately we are against the curtailment of our freedom," he added.

At one point during the radio interview Adan said: "We believe that [media] should have self-regulation."

Another ranking military official, Lt. Gen. Alan Cabahug Jr., chief of the Armed Forces National Capital Region Command, also showed the importance of media responsibility.

He implied that some media interviews could help the authorities in assessing the veracity of what a suspected terrorist was saying, and probably also help them track him down.

"All kinds of opportunities in the information war should be taken advantage [of]," he said.

"What I would [like to] say is that you should not kill the messenger, just get the message."

Media's limits

The question, he said, was distinguishing who was the messenger and who was the adversary.

"You've got to be responsible for your actions. You should remain a messenger," he said. Otherwise, the reporter becomes liable under the law, he said.

Bantuli didn't mean anything wrong with interviewing a terrorist, Cabahug said. "If you become the propounder of the message, then you are part of the problem already. I think you know what I'm talking about."

Arroyo welcomes RBP move

For her part, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday welcomed the decision by the Sagunian ng mga Bandilang sa Pilipinas to delay air time to terrorist groups.

Speaking before the World Trade 2005 Philippine Convention in Davao City, Ms Arroyo said the RBP decision showed "how sensitive and prudence are perceptively dawning upon the media."

"That is taking part in the high responsibility of remaking our national destiny," she said.

Long-running dilemma

The issue of how to deal with attempts by radical groups to use the media to air their views has repeatedly provoked debate among media organizations and academics.

In guidelines for its reporters, the government British Broadcasting Corp. said: "The issue can arise not only in language but through it were our own."

The BBC warned that its credibility could be undermined if "unattributed audiences" deserve a bias for or against any of those involved. No extra language is lost."

It added: "The BBC interviews active terrorists only on occasions where we believe the public interest in doing so outweighs the outrage and offense such interviews are likely to cause our audiences."

Danger of labels

The concerns brought up by Racelis were also raised by other academics after the Australian Broadcasting Corp. blacklisted the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as terrorist organizations.

Law professor Harris M.D. Lesaca, in a 1992 article in the Inquirer, cautioned against indiscriminate labelling of groups as terrorists.

"Today it may be the CPP tomorrow it could be the Moro National Liberation Front, then Sabayan, Sanlakas and other legitimate bastions of dissent," Lesaca cautioned. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño

Rights abuse charges filed vs bomb suspects

By Armando N. Mesa

CHARGES of gross human rights violations were filed yesterday against members of the Abu Sayyaf terror group who had been linked to the deadly bombing on Valentine's Day that killed four people and wounded 40 in Makati City.

Named in a four-page complaint submitted to the Commission on Human Rights by the Department of Justice were Angalo Trinidad, alias Abu Khalil; Gumal Baharan, alias Tipay; a certain Dap Negre or Maulan; Khadaffy Janjalani, leader of the Abu Sayyaf group; Jainal Sali, alias Abu Solaiman, and a certain Jackie or Cocky.

Trinidad and Baharan are now in the custody of the Philippine National Police. The complaint did not say however, if Dap Negre or Maulan was Gappal Rasmah who was captured in Indonesia in connection with the bombing.

Janjalani and Abu Solaiman, leader and spokesperson, respectively, of the al-Qaeda linked Abu Sayyaf, remained at large.

State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco said he filed the case on behalf of slain victims Ann Marie Sandoval, Rosario Hernandez, Antonio Rosario and Raoul Bautista, and 40 other less grievously wounded in the attack.

"This is to show that not only government authorities can commit human rights violations, this holds true for others and terrorists," Velasco said in telephone interview.

"Although they claim that they have done this for a political cause, there is no denying that innocent lives were lost," he added.

In the complaint, Velasco said the bombing violated a provision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of persons."

He also cited the Philippine Constitution that says "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law."

On Monday the DOJ filed with the Makati Regional Court multiple counts of murder and illegal possession charges against the Abu Sayyaf members. With a report from AFP

SC won't reopen Ninoy case

THE SUPREME Court yesterday denied a petition from the 14 accused in the double murder of opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. and Rolando Galman asking for the reopening of the case.

The high tribunal said the petitioners' claim that they had "newly discovered evidence" was "unfounded and purely speculative."

In a unanimous decision denying the petition of the Public Attorney's Office, the high court said the 14 accused failed to present "concrete basis to support their cross-claims."

"We are not moved by the petitioners' assertion that the [case] evidence may have been manipulated and tainted during the trial of the case," said the 25-page resolution penned by Associate Justice Romeo Callejo.

Most of the 14 who were all convicted for the double murder and sentenced to double life imprisonment were members of the Aviation Security Command group that met Aquino on Aug. 21, 1983, as he got off a China Airlines plane at the then Manila International Airport.

The Marcos government claimed that Galman, an airport ground employee, had shot Aquino and was in turn shot by soldiers.

The soldiers were convicted in 1990 by the Sandiganbayan. The SC later affirmed the verdict.

Armando N. Mesa

Unpaid overtime slows down air traffic controllers

THE COUNTRY'S more than 600 air traffic controllers nationwide have refused to do any more overtime work after the government failed to compensate them for the additional hours they had logged since October last year.

Because of this, there was a slowdown in the country's air traffic services causing delays in arriving and departing flights nationwide, as well as heavy air traffic, according to Eddie Juico, Department of Transportation and Communications secretary and Air Transportation Office (ATO) head.

Air traffic controllers, who work in three shifts had increased the maximum overtime they can render from 40 hours a month to 112 hours.

Juico said that at 5 p.m. yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo approved overtime pay for the air traffic controllers. Eddie Ilasco

Filipino wins int'l award for work with mangroves

Ph.D.(biol) research scientist Angelique Fernandez Pinnoy has won a New Fellow in Marine Conservation, the world's most prestigious award to marine conservation for her work in preserving and managing mangroves in the country.

As one of five New Fellows in the field, she will receive $1,500,000 for a three-year project and become part of the world's premier network for ocean science and conservation.

"Dr. Pinnoy's work to preserve and restore mangroves is essential to maintaining the overall health of coastal areas and she fills an important niche within the growing conservation legacy of the Pew Fellows," said Dr. Elliot Phillips, executive director of the Pew Institute for Ocean Science at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School and a Pew Fellow herself.

Her work will demonstrate that protecting mangroves can save lives and property from devastating typhoons. How can she runoff that kills coral reefs, provide nurseries to juvenile fish and shrimp, and restore fisheries catches, Pfleiderer said.

Pinnoy's works in senior scientist at the aquaculture department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center based in Iloilo.

She spent several years doing research on shrimp aquaculture, which often involves the clear-cutting of mangroves, before changing course to sustainable aquaculture.

Last year, she received an honorary doctorate from Stockholm University. Her citation read: "In cooperation with scientists from Stockholm University she has shown that mangroves are key areas for recruitment of fish and shrimp and that development of conventional shrimp farming may have far-reaching negative economic and social implications. In order to create sustainable alternatives she is now doing research on more sustainable integrated farming of shrimp, fish, crabs and mangroves."

She is also a member of the Swedish Royal Academy on Agriculture and Forestry.

Pinnoy's holds a Ph.D. in Marine Sciences, a B.S. in Geology cum laude from the University of the Philippines, and an MA in Geology from Indiana University.

The Pew Fellows Program in Marine Conservation is part of the Pew Institute for Ocean Science, in partnership with the University of Miami. The institute strives to undertake rigorous and visionary world-class scientific activity aimed at protecting the world's oceans and the species that inhabit them.

Angat water level near-critical

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE WATER level in Angat Dam is nearing the critical level, threatening the farms in Bulacan and Pampanga and indicating a longer period of limited water supply for Metro Manila.

The National Water Resources Board recorded the water level at Angat at 190.11 meters as of 12 p.m. Monday. The level is expected to breach the 180-meter critical mark by April.

NWRB Director Ramon Alikpala said the water level was dropping by one meter every three days.

"We have to be prepared for the possibility of the dam reaching its critical level once the data provided for the water supply requirements for domestic use of Metro Manila and the agricultural use of Bulacan and parts of Pampanga," Alikpala said.

The below-normal rainfall due to the El Niño phenomenon along with the damaged access-regulating structures in the Umiray tunnel were the biggest factors in the decrease in the dam's water level, the NWRB said.

The Umiray tunnel, which supplies 30 percent of the water needs of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, was damaged by the typhoons that hit the country late last year.

The MWSS is eying completion of the repairs by the end of the month.

"Officially, we're still letting the effects of the El Niño. And if Umiray is not yet fixed right away, the reduced water supply could last until June or July," Alikpala said.

The water supply for Metro Manila had been cut by 4 cubic meters per second since December. From 43.7 cu. m it is now 39.7 cu. m, affecting mostly the areas serviced by Maynilad Waters.

The 180-meter mark is considered a critical level because it prevents the water from reaching the irrigation systems of Pampanga and Bulacan due to the height of the structures.

"There is nothing we can do about the inconvenience it causes, but we can conserve (water)," Alikpala said.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER A1

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy B. Pellicena

Smart pulls plug on SEAG aid

SHOWING 'EM HOW Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, a former action star and stuntman, shows off his silver-screen fighting form to 1994 Olympic boxing silver medalist Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco (right) and billiards greats Efren "Bata" Reyes (left) and Francisco "Django" Bustamante (just from left) during a break in the Senate inquiry into the country's hosting of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games. Lapid is the chair of the committee on Games, Amusements and Sports. (Story on Page A16)

Telecom giant rues Globe lockout clause

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SMART has hung up. There goes at least P100 million for the Southeast Asian Games coffers.

Failing to get a workable deal from the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee, telecommunications giant Smart Communications Inc. has backed out of its bid to be one of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games' major sponsors.

Sources from the Pldoot yesterday revealed the collapse of negotiations between officials of the Pldoot and Smart, which had offered to top the P100-million Ginebra Gold Challenge series ceremonies for the Philippine Olympic Committee, the two sides could not find ways to tie Smart to exclusive sponsorship privileges without offending Globe.

Globe's rival, which the Pldoot has really availed itself of last Feb. 16, entailed a lockout on all the advertising and marketing opportunities in the industry.

A PSA official who did not want to be named by Pldoot president Chet Pagdanganan, Gregorio Jarrod that Smart was willing to match that sponsorship and make a separate donation that would be free from the exclusivity which the Pldoot offers.

Pagdanganan also said he would work out an arrangement where both Globe and Smart could co-exist, regardless of the lockout provisions.

However, nothing close came out as the lockout arrangement always got in the process.

The same sources said Smart has already relayed its position to Pldoot.

With only eight months to go before the SEAG starts on May 27, 2005 is running out on the Pldoot, which is still arranging the funds to meet the project's P1000 million to P1 billion to organize the biennial event.

The Pldoot has not come up with a website, a vital tool where participating countries can get updates on the host's preparations.

Also on top of the Pldoot's shopping list are training and competition equipment, estimated to cost P376 million, which are ideally purchased at least six months before the competitions.

The Pldoot earlier admitted that the equipment, once purchased, need at least a month to be shipped as most of them will be bought abroad.

The same sources at Pldoot said there's no money yet to fund the purchases.

Burgess-stirred SMB battles Coke

SAN MIGUEL Beer coach Jong Uichico finds little reason to complain about the Beermen's midseason rest before the PBA Fiesta Conference.

While Alaska has brought to a familiar face and San Lucio finally performed the late arrival of a rookie, Beer supposedly on top of almost everybody's wish list, Uichico has slipped into a comfort zone of sorts with import Chris Burgess.

"It's exactly what we saw in the tapes," said Uichico of Burgess, who produced 22 points and 13 rebounds in the Beermen's 83-73 opening-day victory over Alaska. "He's a team player."

And the Beermen are hoping for another dominating performance from the 6-foot-10 American center when they battle the Coca-Cola Tigers today at the Araneta Coliseum.

"It is a good start to our total import play with us[?]," said Uichico as the Beermen gun for the early conference lead at 6-0[?] p.m.

In the second game, the Alaska team and the Sta. Lucia Realtors are hoping to recover from their first game losses with the help of new imports when they meet at 7:30 p.m.

MONARCH Another chance

Alaska, to limit 6-foot-10 Ajuri Wilkerson after they dismayed performance of Leon Derricks, who finished with only eight points and nine rebounds in 41 minutes of play against the Beermen.

Williams already suited up for the Aces in the 2004 Commissioner's Cup.

Sta. Lucia will field 6-foot-10 Rafael Bruno, who recently played in Argentina and Brazil. He replaced Richard Jaxe, who shot only six points and grabbed four rebounds in 36 minutes of action in a 79-65 loss to the Coca-Cola Tigers.

Bruno was Sta. Lucia's original choice—and reportedly a top favorite among other teams—but failed to arrive in time for the Realtors' first match.

Bruno import is Jo Rithwich did not have an impressive debut...or least, offensively...but the coaching staff is giving him the benefit of a second chance before deciding on his fate.

"He needs to convince himself," said Tigers mainstay Dondon Hontiveros, who grabbed a game-high 16 rebounds but scored only eight points. "He'll see how he plays in the next few games and then we'll decide if he'll stay[?]."

The bright spot for the rookie that encountered import woes early on was that the locals showed they can step up when needed to. In beating the Realtors, the Tigers turned to John Arigo as the fifth individual to dominate over the victory.

Alaska, on the other hand, got big games from Jeffrey Cariaso and Cris Villuriy, who had earlier asked for a trade in the off-season. Villuriy Aquino agreeing a contending surprise for Sta. Lucia as he prepared to 10 points.

Amanda M. Papa

THE NAME OF QUALITY AND DESIGN
CARRYBOY
World Class Auto Accessories

Address: 55 Kamuning Ave. Maharlika Hwy., West Kamias St., Quezon City
Tel.: 7400-330 or 25 Fax: 7323-109 Website: www.carryboy.com

Antonio, Mariano ahead

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union—Grandmasters Joey Antonio and Mikhail Mariano II led a bunch of top gunners in the 6th La Union Open Chess Championships yesterday in the Onga Hiking Hall of the provincial capitol here.

The 43-year old Antonio, pride of the Philippine Army, downed Jake Bonsing of Baguio City in 41 moves of a Pirc/Modern defense to the first round then topped NICOlab Mariano of Mayantoc, Tarlac, in 45 moves of a Sicilian Defense: Alapin variation.

Antonio next faces IM Rustom Tolentino, who won over Reynal de Villalobos and Severo "Ernie" Gonzales, respectively.

The fourth seeded Mariano collapsed Social Intel Jonah Jehaffiel in 40 moves of a Sicilian defense and NM Alex Melegrosa after 45 pushes of a Center Counter duel to match their unbeaten record in the tournament that offers P75,000 for the champion. Marlon Bernardino, contributor

With so many churches, why is RP still corrupt?

By Christel V. Bigueras

WITH so many churches, how come the Philippines is still corrupt?

The head of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches yesterday posed this question as he challenged the 20,000 churches under the group's wing to go through a process of self-examination.

At present, there are 11,101 evangelical and Protestant churches in the country, accounting for 9 percent of the population, according to Bishop Efraim Tendero, citing findings by the research project "The Church in the Philippines" by Dr. Manfred Kohl.

The number is on top of the members of the Catholic Church that accounts for at least 81 percent of the population, according to the study.

"Are we making an impact on our society?" Tendero asked yesterday during the book's launching at Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila.

"We are known to be the only Christian nation in Asia but we are also the second most corrupt in this area of the world," he said.

While around 49,000 churches have sprouted over the past 15 years, the corruption index in the country has also increased, according to Tendero.

"We have no research done on relating both factors," he said in a speech. "But we have to ask the question."

Salt and light of society

What is apparent, he said, was that churches—despite their number—have not served enough as "the salt and light of society to make a difference."

"That impact in society is not felt," he said. "Let us engage in socio-political concerns. Let's participate in the fight against corruption. Let's provide solutions [to the problem], not just an analysis."

Part of the reason is probably the fact that many of these churches are still in the "early stage of adolescence," having been established only in the past two decades, the bishop said.

Protestant and evangelical churches are also mostly going through problematic times as pointed out by Bishop Tendero.

Mentoring program

The number of churches may be huge but "they are struggling to reach (out) for each others," Kohl said at the press conference. "They have to find ways to do things together."

Training future leaders is also an issue Kohl lamented the absence of a mentoring program among the country's evangelical churches.

What is no longer the presence of 307 training institutions all over the Philippines, he pointed out. "We need a kind of funding it seems," he said.

Training schools and their students are central to the future of the church, he said.

"Where the schools go, the church follows," he said. "In the end, the vision of the research project is that the church of the Philippines will be more effective to the glory of God."

OUR LADY OF FATIMA UNIVERSITY

ONCE AGAIN, WE CONGRATULATE OUR GRADUATES FOR MAKING FATIMA A TOPNOTCH UNIVERSITY.

MEDICINE - FEBRUARY 2005
1st Place/ DR. CHRISTOPHER ALVIO CHANG
2nd Place/ DR. REMUEL BELEN BICORNES
4th Place/ DR. CARINA VALENCIA CHAVENTE
8th Place/ DR. STEPHANIE LIH ALAMOY-DY
12th Place/ DR. ROEL VELCHEZEVANGELISTA
13th Place/ DR. NELSON CANTARIO AGAPAY JR.
14th Place/ DR. ALEX LASMAR CRUZ
16th Place/ DR. RANDOLPH DOMEL MOSELINA
20th Place/ DR. MICHELLE FANTINAO CHUNGAIT
DR. JOMAR DIVERGA MARCELO

MEDICINE - FEBRUARY 2004
1st Place - Elmer R. Jacinto
2nd Place - Rico J. Canoza
4th Place - Marilyn A. Bermudez
7th Place - Jessie V. De Leon
13th Place - Vennen A. Cotiyoko

MEDICINE - AUGUST 2003
1st Place - Josellia C. Zinkie

MEDICINE - FEBRUARY 2003
1st Place - Loubonic Cyrus E. Antonio
2nd Place - Arlene A. Amigo
3rd Place - Sarah L. Lantin
7th Place - Nelson U. Loponio
8th Place - Reiner A. Cello
- Alvin Rey B. Tan

MEDICINE - FEBRUARY 2002
1st Place - Amapola Dumbo
2nd Place - Carlo Rodrigo Cansen
9th Place - Juan Lorenzo Ilao

DENTISTRY - 2002
1st Place - Sharon Y. Ledro

DENTISTRY - 2003
7th Place - Jennifer G. Tolosa

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY - 2003
4th Place - Maryjel B. Rota

PHYSICAL THERAPY - 2003
5th Place - Vilerio P. Palaruan III
9th Place - Richelle Anne T. Enrona
10th Place - Gregorio T. Dalet

NURSING - 2002
1st Place - Anna Maria H. Solarian
4th Places - Irene L. Barraga
- Ma. Olivia P. Santos
6th Places - Stella Marie C. Cruz
- Edwin Tomot S. De Leon
8th Places - Judith G. Castellano
- Teresita E. Petre
9th Places - Angelica E. Pangilinan
- Rhodora R. Cenero
10th Place - Edsir M. Lopez
11th Place - Rosemarie B. Tecarro
12th Place - Bella Marilou B. Dagupio
13th Place - Cheryl R. Tripanes
16th Places - Irene Margaret L. De Leon
- Lucilyn A. Bautista
- Rolando G. Baria
17th Place - Maria Rita R. Uy
18th Places - Eileen P. De Guzman
- Guadalupe T. Valencia
- Graciela D. Villones
- Doris S. Sebastian
19th Places - Gemae G. Sallo-Semonte
- Liezel S. Atuna
20th Places - Maita Emma F. Chua
- Christmarelle B. Sotiggo
- Rama R. Taddeo

College of Medicine - 5 Topnotchers in the last 4 years
College of Nursing - 100% Passing Rate, October 2004 Batch (Valenzuela)
93% Passing Rate, March 2004 Batch (Valenzuela & Quezon City)
College of Dentistry - Consistent Top Performing Dental School
College of Pharmacy - Top Performing Pharmacy School
94% Passing Rate
College of Medical Technology - 100% Passing Rate, March 2004 Batch
Marine Transportation - 100% Passing Rate

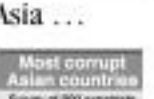
Down payment P1,500 for BS Courses
P15,000 for Medicine
Transferees accepted
Scholarships available
Affordable tuition fees

*SCHOLARSHIP EXAMS:
College of Medicine
April 16 & May 21, 2005, 8:30am

120 McArthur Highway
Valenzuela, Metro Manila
admissions@fatima.edu.ph
283-2703 to 06
291-6556, 291-6644
291-6504

Our Lady of Fatima College
Quezon City Campus
Hilltop Subd., Legaspi, Quezon City
935-2947, 419-1288, 419-1291

RP No. 2 on Asia . . .



1	Indonesia	9.16
2	Philippines	8.90
3	Vietnam	8.67
4	India	8.62
5	China	7.60
6	Thailand	7.20
7	Malaysia	6.05
8	South Korea	5.90
9	Taiwan	5.15
10	Hong Kong	3.63
11	Japan	3.46
12	Singapore	0.93

Source: PERC

than 220,000 Indonesians dead or missing, mainly in bush provinces.

If the former general succeeds in fighting corruption, the economy would improve and realize its basic groups such as Aceh to banish "with so much more prosperity, there will be a flow to the country and its region."

Indonesia's post-tsunami relief program "presents a real opportunity to improve the governance and transparency standards of the dysfunctional society that not only fears but in other developing countries, PERC said.

At the other end of the scale, Asia's businessmen have consistently rated Singapore as being the least corrupt country in Asia, but the view is not shared by opponents of the People's Action Party (PAP), which has ruled the city-state since independence in 1965, PERC said.

The could cause problems for Singapore overseas since key PAP critics live in exile and could raise questions about Singapore's "persistent integrity" as state-linked companies expand abroad, PERC said.

Thailand's image improves

Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, boosting Thailand's image has improved following a crackdown on graft, but PERC said there are "deep, ingrained and pervasive "that benefit politically large industries and businesses, many of which happen to have close links with influential politicians."

In Malaysia, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has guaranteed strong public support with his campaign stance, but allegations of internal corruption in the ruling coalition have weakened, PERC noted.

Cameroon, Tanzania, and, as China and Vietnam rule, entrenched measures against corruption such as exercising offenders, the diary still have a worse reputation than seven countries because they lack democratic checks and balances and free elections, PERC noted.

It said corruption in China could potentially cause the most damage. "China's growing economic role in the region and beyond ensures that the global fallout from any crisis precipitated by corruption on the mainland would be severe," the consultancy group said.

"In view of the growing influence of multinationals on China's economic base, such a crisis would wreak havoc with a lot of companies' bottom lines," PERC said. Reports from AFP/Reuters and Robert F. Flores

Singapore least corrupt

In the PERC survey, now now in 10th year, countries are graded between zero—the best possible score—and 10.

Singapore's grade was an almost perfect 0.93, followed by Japan at 3.46 and Hong Kong at 3.63.

Next, but far behind, were Taiwan at 5.15, South Korea at 5.9, Malaysia at 6.05, Thailand at 7.20, China at 7.60, India at 8.62, Vietnam at 8.67, the Philippines at 8.90 and Indonesia at 9.16.

The Arroyo administration has launched a campaign to crack down on corruption. It is conducting lifestyle checks on government officials, especially those working in the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Customs.

But a former Hong Kong government official on the government leadership's move in public to fight corruption.

Adviser from Hong Kong

Tom Stuck, former deputy commissioner of the Hong Kong Commission Against Corruption, which the appeal in Manila as he expressed honor for his appointment as chief adviser of the ambitious three-year Corruption Prevention Project of the Office of the Ombudsman.

"I am confident that given the effective enforcement and successful prosecution by the Office of the Ombudsman) and the partnership approach in this corruption prevention project, it is possible that this three-year project will are a marked improvement in the eradication of corruption in this country," Stuck said. He is set to act as anti-corruption presidential adviser.

The Office of the Ombudsman launched the anti-corruption project in an attempt to reduce opportunities for graft in government, promote fair competition in business and provide agencies that offer services to the poor with more resources.

The project, which the European Union sponsors, was launched during a two-day anti-corruption workshop, which started on March 8 at the Bay View Hotel in Manila.

The launching was attended by Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, dignitaries from the EU and the British Council, and some 100 participants from the government's seven department and agencies.

In the project, the Office of the Ombudsman will establish a close partnership with civil society organizations, the public and other government agencies.

Make or break

In its report, PERC said "the issue of corruption could make or break Indonesia."

It said "reform outsider" Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was elected Indonesia's president last year partly because voters were "disgusted with the corruption of an entrenched, secular elite."

PERC urged Yudhoyono to ensure that foreign aid was used transparently to prepare that Indonesia's tsunami that left more

SUMMER FUN. COMPLETE WORKSHOPS.

this Summer make it Happen!

JOIN A JOHN ROBERT POWERS SUMMER WORKSHOP JUST FOR KIDS, TEENS, GRADS.

Special Age Group Workshops in Personality Development, Acting, Modeling, Etiquette, and Grooming. Anyway, and whatever lessons to fit your schedule. Enroll Now and Finish before your regular school classes begin. Earn the World-wide John Robert Powers International Certificate. MAKE THIS SUMMER THE BEST EVER! HAVE FUN AND GET THE LIFETIME BENEFITS OF A PERSONALITY AT JOHN ROBERT POWERS. Enroll early for choice schedules.

CALL NOW!
892 9511

John Robert Powers

SAVE UP TO P5,000. ENROLL BEFORE MARCH 31. 0% INTEREST. ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED.

AirPhil snatches 6-5 center

DEZON

LABAGALA

By Marc Anthony Reyes

All Philippines rookie 6-foot-5 shotmaker Kenneth Cepalcung the No. 1 pick during yesterday's drafting for the PBA Unity Cup.

From among 70 aspirants, the Flight chose the Jose Rizal University center in their bid to finally take off after landing eighth and last in their maiden flight in the Open Championship last month.

Crushing a senior management decision, coach Joe Ildefonso who called his coach Lawrence Chongson as he was unbeatable over in the NCAA.

"He's going to be a big help to us, especially in the middle," said Chongson. "He's a fundamentally sound player, we needed a player like him."

Two more 6-foot-5 players were named as picks No. 2 and 3 after Toyota Otis Lorenzo picked Wesley Nalzaro and Cesamy Goco chose Marvin Hayward.

Boosted Dezon, drafted by Magnolia Dairy Ice Cream, teamed up as the No. 4 choice, followed by Cola Mandog of Welcoat Paints. Joseph Labagala rounded out Ilan, Ilan Stromberg, while Jayson Yingson joined Governors' Harbour Center.

Of the players not in the draft, only 19 got to victorious first different teams.

Among the players being eyed by Harbour Centre are LA Tenorio, Gabby Espinas, Jay Mendoza, Jason Castro, Jeffrey Montes and Magnolia Members Francis Vicente will roll the dice for the team, with Gil Cortez as team manager and Jessie Famorca as team consultant.

The Flight also picked Gil Manrero as point guard Nelrod Labagala, while the Jimgbo drafted Dalton Bantayan.

Others who made it to the second round were Rafael Jalalaga (Granity Ilocos), Ilan Stromberg (Magnolia), Jeffrey Hamal (Welcoat) and Gilbert Yee (Harbour).

Without dropped until the fifth round, snagging five, including Angelo Surgil, Michael de Guzman and Norman Nuñal.

Can Pacquiao KO a great doll?

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—The call of the moment is for a severe scrutiny, with strict police assistance, if you please.

Team Pacquiao must play it very shrewdly because, in the end, it will all boil down to how well the opponent has been neutered.

No problem, nothing to worry normal Gabriel Bobby Pacheniba.

Manny Pacquiao's second Pinoy handler sounded like a trained cop yesterday as he kept mum over Pacquiao-in-their-trained workouts-apartment-in-Sunset Boulevard.

The most famous living Filipino was taking his usual heel out after another lung morning jog around the hills of Hollywood.

Pacquiao's weight workout, 126 lbs., can only do the super featherweight limit, despite fighting like a king.

Same with the opening. Over 200 rounds against taller partners who simulated the stance and style of Erik Morales.

Pacquiao said Pacquiao could ramble against Morales anytime.

The trainer insisted he was not bragging, but merely repeating a happy fact.

***

Well, Pacquiao need not be told that Erik Morales has been reading the same conditioners.

In fact, unlike Team Pacquiao, the Mexican camp did not have to dig hard to measure the career logs in Pacquiao's fighting fact file.

The Mexicans have definitely made advance preparations on how to locate the impact, if not totally deflect the killer punch.

There's no way they could defuse the Pacquiao bomb.

But, with first information on the terror in Pacquiao's fist, it comes but said the FilPinoy hero would enter the ring with a concealed weapon.

At the same time, Morales cannot just shrug off what Pacquiao and his chief trainer, Freddie Roach, had bragged about a secret weapon they plan to explode on fight night.

Team Pacquiao went as far as labelling it "Manila Ice," a play allegedly perfected to trap the Mexican warrior cold.

***

All things told, Pacquiao appears to be enjoying a slight edge in this pre-fight jaw-wag.

But that's only if you're reading the fight

blurbs, not to mention the teams from the PR spins camp.

A closer, more concerned scrutiny would, however, learn that Team Pacquiao may have overlooked a crucial plus point in Morales' armory.

This has obviously escaped the eyes of many fight analysts. But Pacquiao could be totally ignorant about the unthinkable gift that has saved Morales from being knocked out in all his bouts.

He absolutely could make it appear that Morales is gifted with an unbreakable chin.

The Mexican warrior has rare qualities that make his head roll and swivel out of harm's way upon feeling hits.

Morales could, in fact, be likened to a doll with a magical invulnerable head like mods.

It was almost impossible to nail him down with a blow to the head.

Trying that would be an futile, frustrating exercise like punching a rubber ball into a pail of water.

***

Well, these qualities are obviously taken for-granted with an undefeated 5-time world champion who thoroughly dedicates and cultivates his every waking moment to the sport.

Maybe Freddie Roach has himself noticed this Morales gift.

But, Pacquiao, who trade in "headline" blows, cannot be instantly taught to tape Morales's deadly advantage.

What's necessary now is an adjustment in artillery.

It would not be easy to stop Morales with the usual swinging punch, also a Pacquiao favorite.

But, would Pacquiao care to emphasize on a new weapon, like that chilling uppercut that sent Thai Nihom JR Bataray asleep for the count in Taguig last December?

This an addition from Freddie Roach.

Or is that explosive new blow part of the "Manila Ice" plot?

Ilagan rejects POC decision

DISMISSED former swimming president Chito Ilagan yesterday denied that he changed the composition of the Pasig boat fleet just to evacuate his detractors, a charge brought forward by the Philippine Olympic Committee when it was booted in recognition to the faction led by Mark Joseph.

"I don't know where they got [that notion]," Ilagan said through a press statement, stating the regional board of the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (Pasa) is autonomous and not subject to tinkering.

"It is impossible to control the decision of the board because [it is made up of] independent members[.]"

Ilagan also said the president of the National Capital Region swimming association, lawyer Bernadette Aloja, who is also a member of the current Pasa board, denied that any manipulation took place in last year's board composition.

The arbitration committee's unanimous ruling was in direct contrast to the one reached by former POC president Celso Cruz in during his term.

Cruz, pointing out that Joseph wasn't a regional director, affirmed Ilagan's election as swimming president.

Gordon lashes Philsoc over slow SEAG show

THE SENATE Committee on Games, Amusement and Sports yesterday expressed dissatisfaction on the status of the country's hosting of the Southeast Asian Games slated Dec. 27 to Dec. 5.

Sen. Richard Gordon questioned the delays in the preparations and the failure of the SEAG organizers to devise an innovative campaign for the biennial event.

Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) officials, however, reassured that they started 2005 "new budget."

"I'm concerned about our inevitably end situation," said Gordon. "We must send the last minute and then we try to catch up."

"I've been very concerned about our hosting of the SEA Games. Among other things, there are questions raised about our ability to host."

Philsoc vice chair Jose "Peping" Cojuangco noted, however, that his team has been working on corporate deals to bankroll the event.

"The one history is done," said Cojuangco. "But I think that with the commitment given by donors ... I think we'll get results." — Jeannie B. Payo

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

Syria to pull back troops this month

DAMASCUS—Syria, under world pressure to quit Lebanon, promised on Monday to shift its troops to eastern areas this month, but the US dismissed the plan for failing to set a deadline for a full withdrawal.

The pullback would be the biggest single such move since Syrian forces intervened in Lebanon's civil war in 1976. It now has some 14,000 troops there, down from 40,000.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad agreed the withdrawal plan in talks with his Lebanese counterpart Emile Lahoud in Damascus.

The Syrian troops will complete their move to eastern Lebanon by March 31, said a statement after the talks. The Syrian and Lebanese military will then decide how long the Syrians stay there.

The plan means Syrian troops will be gone from most but probably not all of Lebanon before general elections due by May.

The United States considered such "half measures" unsatisfactory. White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said,

"This does not add up to Syria leaving Lebanon. Nobody has said all troops are leaving Lebanon," said senior department official.

"We will continue to hold their feet to the fire, not accept half measures and call a spade a spade—that is, when they make these announcements about a withdrawal that a number can plan on themselves, we will call it for what it is."

Germany, France and Britain urged Syria to move swiftly.

"We expect Syria to withdraw its troops and security services completely and as quickly as possible," German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's spokesman Thomas Steg said in a joint statement.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said separately that Syria's move was welcome as a "first step," adding: "We expect to see rapid progress in the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the whole of Lebanon" in line with a UN resolution last year.

Reuters

LEBANESE soldiers smile as they leave their position in Metairiq, east of Beirut, on the main Beirut-Damascus highway that links the capital to the Bekaa Valley. —

We supply BEST SELLING Foods !!!
1. Prime Steak — 6. Stuffed Shrimps
2. Beef Bbq Dinuguan — 7. Lechon Baboy
3. Lechon Baboy — 8. Chicken Nuggets
4. Golden Fried Asado — 9. Bistec w/ Cheese
Bola-Bola/Tuna Pan — 10. Beef Pyanggang
5. Sinchon & Dapilan — 11. Chicken Relyeno
Mamasan — 12. French Fries
Commercial Inc. (Quiapo) 5050 74 888 / 736 9116
KMC Food Corp. (Mandaluyong) Tel 440-5555

IWATA Paper Shredder
Can shred CD's, Credit Cards & Staple Wire
₱8,600 ₱7,800
COLLINS ENTERPRISE CO.

IWATA TIME RECORDERS
Brand New Models, As Low As 7 Days or Ten Money Back
FREE DEMO
Operations Starting As Low As ₱5,500 + tax
₱5,500.00 ₱5,500 + tax
₱12,500.00 ₱12,500
Get Extra 6 Months Of Ribbon Ink Free
Purchase Any Time Recorder Machine And Get An Extra 6 Months Of Ribbon Ink Free
COLLINS ENTERPRISE CO.

COPIERS Brand New
Canon • Minolta • Sharp
Also Available : LIQUID COPIERS
COPYTRADE

HAVE A SMASHING SUMMER!
Attend the
VERNON TAPALLA'S COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS and THE WRITING INSTITUTE
Workshops
Seminars
Courses
Consultancy
Training
Coaching
Mentoring
Publishing
Events Management
Corporate Communications
Media Relations
Crisis Management
Corporate Image Building
Corporate Identity
Corporate Culture
Speechwriting
Business Writing
Creative Writing
Technical Writing
Proposal Writing
Feature Writing
Editing
Proofreading
Publishing
Events Management
Coaching
Mentoring
Consultancy
Training
Seminars
Workshops
Courses
MAKATI - 751-0102 / 751-0103 ALABANG - 543-0181

BUDGET AIRFARES
$555 BANGKOK $675 BANGKOK
$265 SINGAPORE $620 LOS ANGELES
$125 HONG KONG $620 HONOLULU
$190 SEOUL $750 HONOLULU
$415 TOKYO $650 NAGOYA
$415 TOKYO $650 OSAKA
SPECIAL PROMO PACKAGES
5 DAYS 3 NIGHTS BORACAY/BOHOL/CEBU
5 DAYS 3 NIGHTS PALAWAN
5 DAYS 3 NIGHTS SINGAPORE
TODAYES TOURS AND TRAVEL

SUMMER HOLIDAY TOURS
Holyland with Amman & Petra
Egypt and Mt. Sinai
- USD 1,695.00 -
Departure Date: Apr. 11, 23 & May 9, 2005
MARIAN PILGRIMAGE
- Sightseeing Tour with Venice -
- USD 2,595.00 -
Departure Date: Apr. 19 & May 13, 2005
PLUS!!!
• Kenya Safari Tour
• Holyland to Holyland
• Holyland to Medjugorje
• Holyland with Turkey
• Medjugorje w/ Lourdes & Fatima
travelplan, inc.

BEST BUSINESS BEST OFFER!
Water Business is still the Best Business around! No excuse but lots for them! Don't miss out!
DIRECT FACTORY SALE!
P150,000.00*
Complete Package
Water Purifying Machine
Bottle Blowing Machine
Bottle Filling Machine
Capping Machine
Labeling Machine
Shrink Wrapping Machine
Conveyor
Air Compressor
Water Tank
Pipes & Fittings
Electrical Wirings
Installation
Training
Guarantee
Warranty
Spare Parts
Consumables
Technical Support
Marketing Support
Business Consultancy
Business Partnership
Business Opportunity
Business Franchise
Business Loan
Business Insurance
Business Tax
Business Registration
Business Permit
Business Clearance
Business Certificate
Business Plan
Business Proposal
Business Feasibility Study
Business Valuation
Business Appraisal
Business Audit
Business Accounting
Business Bookkeeping
Business Payroll
Business Inventory
Business Warehousing
Business Logistics
Business Transportation
Business Delivery
Business Distribution
Business Marketing
Business Advertising
Business Promotion
Business Public Relations
Business Sales
Business Customer Service
Business Quality Control
Business Safety
Business Security
Business Environment
Business Ecology
Business Sustainability
Business Growth
Business Expansion
Business Diversification
Business Innovation
Business Technology
Business Research
Business Development
Business Management
Business Leadership
Business Ethics
Business Culture
Business Values
Business Vision
Business Mission
Business Strategy
Business Goals
Business Objectives
Business Plan
Business Proposal
Business Feasibility Study
Business Valuation
Business Appraisal
Business Audit
Business Accounting
Business Bookkeeping
Business Payroll
Business Inventory
Business Warehousing
Business Logistics
Business Transportation
Business Delivery
Business Distribution
Business Marketing
Business Advertising
Business Promotion
Business Public Relations
Business Sales
Business Customer Service
Business Quality Control
Business Safety
Business Security
Business Environment
Business Ecology
Business Sustainability
Business Growth
Business Expansion
Business Diversification
Business Innovation
Business Technology
Business Research
Business Development
Business Management
Business Leadership
Business Ethics
Business Culture
Business Values
Business Vision
Business Mission
Business Strategy
Business Goals
Business Objectives
Orders: (02) 926-6276 (02) 926-5796
Inquiries: (02) 926-6276 (02) 926-5796
Fax: (02) 926-5796
Cell: 0917-8116276
Email: bestbusiness@yahoo.com
Visit us at: www.bestbusiness.com.ph

27 killed in latest attacks in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Twenty-seven people, mostly Iraqi soldiers, were killed in a series of attacks as Iraqiyata leader Iyad Allawi demanded assurances from Washington over the death of one of its soldiers in Iraq.

The worst bloodshed occurred in Balad on Monday when a suicide bomber blew up his vehicle at the entrance to a base for Iraqi soldiers, killing 15 people, including at least two soldiers, and wounding 22, police said.

In recent days, Iraqi commandos and US troops have stepped up operations in the area, a known stronghold of Sunni Arab insurgents, in search of suspects who might lead them to the country's most wanted man, al-Qaida lieutenant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The Jordanian-born militant is blamed for some of the deadliest bombings since the 2003 US-led invasion, as well as executions of foreign hostages.

His group was quick to take credit for a separate attack on an Iraqi army checkpoint further south in al-Mahmudiyah, near Baquba, that left five soldiers and one attacker dead. The US military said the operation involved "20 terrorists" aboard four vehicles.

In Baquba itself four people were killed, including two policemen, when a car bomb detonated as officers passed on their way to the checkpoint attack, police said. Another 11 people were wounded.

Meanwhile, an interpreter was killed in Tal Afar, north of Baghdad, and a soldier was killed by the US army in an operation in Mosul.

Iraq's budding security forces face relentless attacks from insurgents determined to derail US plans to hand over security responsibility and pave the way for a withdrawal of foreign troops two years after the invasion.

A Jordanian businessman was kidnapped Friday in Baghdad, his brother in Amman said, adding that his captors have demanded a $250,000 ransom.

Washington meanwhile characterized as "absurd" allegations by Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, freed after a month in captivity in Iraq, that US soldiers deliberately fired at her convoy killing an Italian intelligence officer escorting her.

"It's absurd to make any such suggestion, that our men and women in uniform would deliberately target innocent civilians. That's just absurd," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan told reporters.

The US government has promised a full investigation.

Nicola Calipari, 56, has been hailed as a national "hero" and "martyr" for his role in saving the 56-year-old correspondent, who was wounded in the shooting near Baghdad airport. AFP

SUBSCRIBE & ADVERTISE IN INQUIRER
09064421 • 09064422 • 09064423 • 09064424

Fans remember Diana as Charles marries Camilla

LONDON—Their archenemy is the woman they call "Camilla," their icon the late Princess Diana.

So it goes without saying that the Diana Circle—a group of fans who have vowed to preserve the princess' memory—disapproves of the impending nuptials between her to the throne Prince Charles and his longtime companion Camilla Parker Bowles.

Instead, they will mark the wedding day April 8 by laying flowers outside Kensington Palace, the late princess' London home.

"Those who can't make it will do the same pictures of the princess in their windows," co-founder Jane Berry said Monday. "We are determined that Diana will not be forgotten."

For its website, called

7 more human bird flu cases found in Vietnam

HANOI—Seven Vietnamese patients who had initially tested negative for bird flu have been found to have carried the virus, the World Health Organization said Sunday after further tests by a laboratory in Tokyo.

All seven had since recovered, officials said.

"The results were positive in Tokyo in a WHO reference laboratory," said Peter Horby, a WHO epidemiologist in Hanoi.

Earlier this year, staff from the WHO, Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases in Tokyo and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, began working with health authorities in Vietnam to improve the reliability of laboratory tests.

"Yesterday, detected H5N1 in specimens from seven persons," WHO said in a statement on its website.

"WHO is awaiting further details about these cases, including outcomes. Specimens of this nature, WHO will also include these cases in the cumulative total for Vietnam."

A Vietnamese doctor in Ho Chi Minh City confirmed Tuesday "some" samples originally tested negative were found positive in Japan, without saying precisely how many.

"There are some differences in the tests between Vietnamese labs and others abroad," the doctor added, asking not to be named.

All the patients have recovered, he said. "WHO has not issued any standards for testing. Therefore, differences are understandable."

Peter Horby said more information was expected in the next few days.

"What it clearly means is that further support is necessary to ensure more quality control is good" in the country's laboratories, Horby said.

But the results don't mean necessarily that Vietnam has a major problem in silent outbreaks.

"Previously all results from Vietnamese laboratories have been reliable. It could be just a problem with one lab," he said.

Four people are currently in hospital with the illness in Hanoi, three of whom are said to be in unstable condition.

Monday, medical sources said a 26-year-old Vietnamese nurse who nursed her e-pasienar with bird flu in northern Vietnam has contracted the deadly virus.

It was still unclear whether the nurse contracted the virus from the patient or visit poultry.

Some experts believe the disease could trigger a devastating pandemic if the H5N1 virus mutates to a form easily transmitted between humans. AFP

Fire in Dominican prison kills 134

PUERTO, Dominican Republic—Rival gangs battling over the drug trade in an overcrowded, understaffed prison set their building ablaze and blocked the doors so them could. Black, killing at least 134 inmates in one of Latin America's worst jailhouse blazes.

Some died in a stampede to escape the flames after guards forced open the padlocked door to the cellblock known as Hell, one survivor said, while others were killed by smoke inhalation.

Only 26 prisoners were rescued from the public safety figure, 75 under and head of the capital on eastern tip of the island, said National Police Chief Manuel de Jesus Arcangel Guzman. Eighteen were injured, four in critical condition, hospital officials said.

The disaster underscored the terrible prison conditions in the Dominican Republic, which has the most overcrowded jails in the Western Hemisphere, more than in US Guam. Dominican Public Safety Minister Interior Nathanael Hamlet Rights Commission says he has been complaining for six years that the Higuey prison "is the worst in the country. It is hell on earth. It would be human beings."

Officials gave varying figures for the prison population, with one saying the burned cell block held as many as 802. The confusion over the exact numbers illustrated some of the problems within the prison system.

Among the victims were four Americans from Puerto Rico sentenced of cocaine trafficking. Two died and two were injured, officials said.

The violence began when one inmate died and wounded another Sunday night and dozens of members of three gangs began fighting for control of who would sell drugs and cigarettes, said national prison director Gen. Ramon de la Cruz Garcia.

Guards broke up that fight, but about 12:30 a.m. Monday, prisoners began rioting, setting fire to pillows and sheets, said police spokesperson Gen. Elmer Diaz.

The inmates had blocked the cellblock entrance to fight it out, said chief firefighter Bonny Mira.

"It's an incredible, sad thing," Mira said. "When we arrived, the door was blocked with the rubble from mattresses and wood beds the prisoners had used to end the riot also." Three jobs damaged the padlock, he said, preventing a swift rescue. AP

Bush picks hardliner Bolton for UN job

WASHINGTON—US President George W Bush named Monday a self-confessed United Nations critic and a hardliner diplomat, John Bolton, as ambassador to the world body.

Bolton, the current undersecretary of state for arms control, was picked for the key job because he knows how to get things done," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said.

"He is a tough-minded diplomat. He has a strong record of success and he has a proven track record of effective multilateral work," she told a media briefing announcing Bush's nomination of Bolton for the post.

Bolton is also popular in South Korea and other hardline regimes because he has slammed the United Nations on many occasions.

He was also a strong advocate of US military action in Iraq, after it failed to win UN Security Council approval.

The lobbyist was "further evidence in many why nothing more should be placed in the UN system," he had said.

If confirmed by the Senate, where it expected to draw the most Democratic opposition, he would replace John Danforth, a former Republican US senator from Missouri who left the UN post in January after seven months on the job. AFP

SUPER MAGNET
Above picture shows the first superconducting magnet for the Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, known by the French initials CERN, in Geneva, Switzerland. The magnets will be used in the LHC at the world's largest particle physics laboratory. AP

Pope back in Vatican in 2 weeks

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II will probably return to the Vatican by Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week leading to Easter, giving him up to 13 more days in the hospital to fully recover from throat surgery and to regain use of his voice, the Vatican said Monday.

A new medical bulletin issued the 84-year-old Pontiff's condition continues to improve but gave no date for discharge from the hospital, where he was rushed Feb. 24 with a breathing crisis for the second time in a month.

However, papal spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls said re-porters John Paul will be back by Palm Sunday, which falls on March 20, although how he will participate in the Easter mass still is undecided.

Holy Week ceremonies include several Masses, an outdoor Way of the Cross procession at the Colosseum and a major address on Easter Sunday.

The spokesperson said the Pope has suffered no complications since the surgery to insert a tube in his windpipe, but that doctors have cautioned John Paul not to use his voice too much to ensure he makes a complete recovery.

"I think the Pope will be here for Holy Week, certainly," Navarro-Valls told reporters.

He said doctors would decide when the tube could be removed.

"The general conditions of the Holy Father continue to improve, which allows the Pope to spend long periods of the day in an arm chair," the Vatican's latest medical bulletin said.

"No complications have arisen because of the tracheostomy surgery. Continual improvements can also be seen in speaking, thanks to the daily rehabilitation," it said. But it added that "doctors have prescribed a prudent abstinence in the pope's use of his voice" to help his larynx, or voicebox, recover.

The Vatican said it would monitor his health update on Thursday.

Roman Catholics would-dwelle had been eagerly awaiting word on whether the Pope was making a strong enough recovery to participate in the run-up to Easter, the most solemn date on the Christian calendar.

At the hospital, Vatican officials released letters and drawings sent to the Pope by Italian third-graders, saying they were among the hundreds of get-well wishes received each day. The drawings showed a smiling Pope wearing a cast, in his hospital bed and at a window giving his blessing.

A girl identified only as Ilaria wrote from the island of Sardinia asking the Pope to come and bring his bathing suit "because the sea is beautiful and the thermal baths would be very good for you."

John Paul has Parkinson's disease, a progressive neurological disorder which affects muscle control, making speech and physical movement difficult. The increasing immobility, along with the stooped posture often suffered by Parkinson's patients, makes him highly vulnerable to medical complications, such as breathing problems.

On Sunday, the Pope made a silent appearance at a window of his 10th floor hospital suite to bless the faithful gathered below—the second such appearance since he was rushed to a Rome hospital. AP

China's parliament accepts Jiang's final resignation

BEIJING—China's parliament Sunday voted to accept the resignation of former supreme leader Jiang Zemin as chair of the state Central Military Commission, formally ending his political career.

The largely ceremonial position was Jiang's last high-level post in the government and now he will be stepping down under the full retirement.

In his resignation letter, Jiang said he "had always looked forward to the complete retirement from leading positions."

He proposed President Hu Jintao succeed him.

At the Great Hall of the People, 2,863 delegates attending the National People's Congress voted to accept the 78-year-old's resignation, eight were against and five were undecided.

Jiang had held the position for 15 years, ever since he was hastily installed as the head of the so-called third generation of leaders following the massacre of pro-democracy protesters on Tiananmen Square in 1989.

In a communique last year when he first tendered his resignation, the Communist Party's central committee praised him for grasping "the development trends of new military reforms in the world with his great insight."

"Under his leadership, national defense and the army modernization process achieved tremendous success," said the communique.

In terms of actual political significance, the resignation Sunday jokes in comparison with Jiang's September announcement that he had given up the Communist Party's CMC, which holds the real power over the military.

President Hu has already taken over all of Jiang's other responsibilities. AP

China's demand for wood a threat to Asia's forests

BEIJING—China's rising demand for wood threatens to devastate timber stocks in countries from Indonesia to Russia, the environmental group WWF said Sunday, calling for more efficient wood use and measures to discourage illegal logging.

Although China still uses 17 times less wood per person than the United States, it is on course to become the world's top consumer sometime within a few years, the WWF said in a report.

China imported almost 40 million cubic meters of timber in 2003, more than half of it from Malaysia, Indonesia and Russia, according to WWF. It said imports are expected to triple to 125 million cubic meters a year by 2010.

Logging bans imposed by China in its mountainous west after flooding in 1998 have decreased domestic supplies.

"Logging bans in China should not lead to forest loss in other parts of the world. Decisive action is needed to ensure that supply chains leading to or through China begin with well managed forests," WWF International's director general, Claude Martin, was quoted as saying in a news release that accompanied the report.

China is now the second biggest market behind the United States for timber, pulp and paper, but is expected to take over the top spot as its economy grows and demand for construction materials and furniture expands.

Increased Chinese demand could take a greater toll because the country is a major destination for wood that was illegally harvested or taken through unsustainable means such as by felling natural forests, according to WWF, formerly known as the World Wide Fund for Nature.

China could reduce the damage by developing environmentally sustainable forestry, recycling and taking other measures to reduce the amount of wood that goes to waste, the report said.

It said China and its suppliers could enforce measures such as tracing the source of wood imports. AP

British gov't plans vs terror rejected

LONDON—British government proposals to fight terrorism suffered a blow Monday when the upper house of parliament voted to allow judges, not a Cabinet minister, to impose restrictions including electronic tagging and curfews on suspects.

The unelected House of Lords voted by 249 to 119 in support of the opposition Liberal Democrat amendment, which came during the detailed committee stage of debate on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill.

The decision modifies the Labor government's initial antiterrorism legislation, which gave the home secretary the right to authorize "control orders" ranging from tagging, curfews and bans on phone and Internet use to full house arrest.

Home Secretary Charles Clarke has already conceded judicial involvement for house arrest orders in an attempt to achieve consensus in the House of Commons.

But parliamentary opposition to the bill remains strong, as even members of Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labor government have demanded that judges be allowed to rule on other control orders as well.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act was passed only narrowly by the House of Commons last week in a 272-219 vote amid a revolt among backbench Labor lawmakers. It is meant to replace a previous antiterrorism measure allowing foreign suspects to be jailed indefinitely without trial, which was ruled unlawful last December.

That law—the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001—expires on March 14. AFP

Signs of Hot Spring

CHILD LABORER
Rina Kumari, 5, cracks stones on the banks of the Mahananda river in Siliguri, northeast India. Over 400 million people in India live below the poverty line. AFPPIX

Tens of thousands raped in east Congo

BUNIA, Congo—Some 100,000 people have fled their homes during the latest bloodletting in Congo's east, a region where tens of thousands of women and children have been raped in recent years, aid and rights groups said on Monday.

An explosion of violence in the mineral-rich, northeastern district of Ituri since late last year has damaged efforts by the former Belgian colony to recover from a wider five-year war.

"The humanitarian situation has become catastrophic since the outbreak of fighting in December," Modibo Traore, the head of the UN Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs in Ituri, said in an interview.

"We are now looking at about 100,000 displaced in all, including about 70,000 that are in the camps," he said.

Traore warned that UN military operations against militia in Ituri, which came just days after the killing of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers this month, would make matters worse as gunmen would vent their anger on long-suffering civilians.

He was speaking in Ituri's capital Bunia as Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report saying government soldiers and rebels had raped tens of thousands of women in the east of Democratic Republic of Congo since fighting broke out in 1998.

Fighters on all sides of Congo's war have raped civilians on a massive scale, but only a few have ever been tried, HRW said.

"Sexual violence has shattered tens of thousands of lives in Congo, but fewer than a dozen victims have seen their assailants prosecuted," said Alison Des Forges, senior adviser to HRW's Africa division.

Fighting between ethnic-based militia in remote Ituri has killed more than 50,000 people since 1999. The latest clashes started in December between Hema and Lendu militia in the Djugu territory, not far from the border with Uganda. Reuters

Bolivia's president offers resignation

LA PAZ—Bolivian President Carlos Mesa on Monday offered his resignation to Congress in exasperation at a series of social conflicts that he said were "strangling" the South American nation.

But lawmakers expressed doubt about granting him his wish.

The head of the legislature, Hormando Vaca Diez, said his "initial personal impression" was that Congress will reject the resignation.

And opposition leader Evo Morales, the president's long-time rival, said Mesa "has to fulfill the mandate given to him" until 2007.

The Roman Catholic church urged the population to remain calm, while the head of the armed forces, Admiral Luis Aranda, said that troops were ready to intervene if police were unable to contain possible violence stemming from Mesa's announcement.

Hundreds of supporters showed up at the presidential palace to back the president, while thousands in El Alto, a hotbed of opposition located 12 kilometers from La Paz, called Mesa a "traitor."

Mesa's decision also sparked fears of a return to Bolivia's authoritarian days, but Aranda discarded such an option, saying he would respect the constitution. AFP

ISSN 0116-2442 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. XXXV, No. 61

OPINION

Text or e-mail feedback to opinion@inquirer.net.ph; subscriber help@inquirer.net.ph

For Inquirer Circulation, Inc. to be known as Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc., 5th floor, CCS Finance Center, Pasay Road cor. Edsa, Makati City; telephone numbers 897-0000 (circulation) and 897-0100 (editorial); fax 897-0870; 897-0782 (circulation); 897-0881 (editorial); Circulation: 897-0000, 897-0100, 7240-0000, 7240-0100 and 7240-0111; Fax 898-0871 to 76

Publisher Isagani Yambot
Editor-in-Chief/Chairman Emeritus Maximo Soliven
Managing Editor Joe Ma. D. Hizalgo
Associate Editors Rina Jimenez-David, Ed Lingao
Associate Editor for Readership Edwardo B. Zamudio
News Editors Antonio T. Carpio Jr., Chief News Desk Coordinator Nina D. Pacalioga
Opinion Editor Lynn C. Ocampo
Business Editor Francisco R. Rodriguez Jr.
City Editor Dino Lim
Associate Editor Jaime Laya, Jr.
Editorial Consultant Antonio Zumel
Chief Photographer Ernesto M. Sandoval
Art & Design Director Lester O. Villamin

Board Chairman Hermon D. Perez
President Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Rosario R. Romero
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services Oscar D. Valdez
Vice President for Operations Peter B. Cuasay
Chief Information Officer Ruben P. Laurel Jr.

All rights reserved. Except as provided by law, no part of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced or distributed for commercial use. Any unauthorized use may be subject to civil and criminal liabilities and penalties under applicable laws.

Ignorance and insecurity

EDITORIAL

WHEN Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan, deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, proposed to restrict media interviews with groups engaged in fighting the government, saying that broadcasting by radio, television, or disseminating by print aids terrorism, he caused a ruckus. Politicians were divided on the issue, and so were the media. The administration is pushing the punishment line, while officials who disagree oppose it. Media groups such as the National Union of Journalists have denounced the proposal, while the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas, whose officers recently took their oaths before the President in Malacañang, has come out in support of the proposal.

In the immediate aftermath of the Valentine's Day bombings, it was certainly chilling to hear an Abu Sayyaf spokesman out only taking credit for the carnage, but also gloating about how they had carried them out. Those who wished to inflict harm on innocent civilians to further their political and religious ends certainly took heart from the gloating. However, it is to equally certain that the majority of decent, peace-loving people, regardless of their current opinion of the government, found the Abu Sayyaf statements cruel, disgusting and condemnable.

But if it were up to the military, the reporters who found and interviewed Abu Sulayman would have been locked up. And this is precisely why such things should not be left to the military.

If it weren't for the media, the public would not have known, beyond a shadow of a doubt, who perpetrated the bombings. Neither would the public have known the reasons behind the bombings. Fear and panic as a result would not only have continued unabated, but that most corrosive and poisonous state to a society—ignorance and suspicion—would have been fostered as well. To our mind, there is no greater threat to national security than the insecurity bred by ignorance. Seeing that the military and police, whether by commission or omission, obviously failed in ensuring public safety by the mere fact that the bombings took place, it would be quite reasonable to hold any military statements on the incidents under suspicion.

This stems from the unfortunate tendency of the military and police, particularly in the past, to camouflage their incompetence by lashing out at the easiest targets available. Or by generally lashing out in general, to soothe their wounded pride by beating down heavily on the populace. The country cannot help suffering from a traumatic suspicion of military rhetoric and combatants, which is why the media must serve as an independent verifier of facts. It is a sign of the short-sightedness of some military officials and allied civilian politicians that their reaction to a threat is to silence the messengers.

The majority of Filipinos, regardless of their political leanings, profession, or circumstance in life, know right from wrong, and are loyal, law-abiding citizens of this country. They can be trusted to know right from wrong, and certainly, in at the very least know terrorism when they read or hear about it. Our public officials must adopt an attitude of trust for the citizens rather than actively distrusting them, even if the citizenry actively distrusts our officials and officers. As we've said, the distrust felt by the public (and media are part of this) stems from decades of bad experiences at the hands of officials and officers.

This is not to say that all media are saints, that all media people are absolutely loyal to the Constitution, to democracy, or to the republic. But we do claim for all our brethren in the profession, and for the citizenry at large, the right to information which is the bulwark of all our liberties. It is for those liberties, first and foremost, and not for something as shadowy and ill-defined as "notion of security," that all officials, from the President down to the humblest private or corporal, ultimately serve. The media are ultimately responsible not to the state, which may impose or attempt to regulate standards of conduct. The media, like government officials, are responsible to the public. It is the public that must ultimately judge the fitness of officials, the trustworthiness of members of media and even the continued validity and existence of the state.

The military is committing a big mistake when it doesn't recognize that the strongest weapon in the fight against terrorism is information that is free, unlimited, unmuzzled.

DENR has contradictory functions

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE PDA flying-club leggers have seen more tree the rest of the Filipino nation who went to save the remaining forests in the Philippines. Environment Secretary Michael Defensor has lifted the total log ban imposed by President Macapagal-Arroyo last year. It did not the floods and landslides that wiped off the face of the earth 16 logers in Quezon, Aurora and Nueva Ecija and killed hundreds of people and rendered tens of thousands more homeless. The disasters were caused by rampant logging in the mountains. But as did the flood that also buried Ormoc earlier, the dire deed have been buried and the dimwits are no longer on the front pages, so it is now safe for Defensor to allow logging again. Only the President can reverse the President who had imposed the total ban.

Besides, Defensor has an excuse. The logers and wood producers have been waging a campaign for the resumption of logging, and among their most ardent defenders and boosters is Iloilo Rep. Narciso Nograles.

Who is Nograles? Why, he is the chair of the Commission on Appointments. And Defensor has not yet been confirmed by the CA. In fact, the two of them were together to the Congressional Club in QC the day after the ban on logging down and to Baguio. [Cheche pereraweez] and Regina [Cantinamaga Pemalan]. Some of the country's biggest loggers are in Baguio, Pichay's home province.

Defensor said he chose to allow logging in the three areas because "it will prevent rent-seeking activities." If the ban on logging does not prevent rent-seeking, what helps is the natural growth of forests." That is the environment secretary speaking. But any student will tell him that there is plenty of rentfall in tropical rainforests. Only a developer from the forests is down. The trees give off plenty of oxygen which rise to the sky and form the clouds that condense into rain. Cut the trees and the rains will stop. So when logging is allowed in the three regions, those areas will "overcome rentfall" to help keep the forests "growth of forests." That is why denuded areas become semi-deserts. That is basic science.

On wilderness particularly, the place now looks no unlike Mount Banahaw in San Mateo, California, or closer to home, Boracay. Shops selling souvenirs abound, restaurants and resorts are everywhere in various corners to the delight of tourists. That is the set up in Boracay. Defensor whips through the "Bay Area," the lights blinking on the horizon gleaming on the surface of the swimming water. Last Christmas particularly, when the weather elapsed mainly and city residents got to draw off their respective stays, it was good to be there. We didn't need to drive off to the mountains or out to the sea to get a respite. We just had to leave the condo.

On a good night in town for business, can see the lights on the other side of the bay as far as the eye can see. Any subsequently, you'll find two rows of cars parked side by side. The area near Asiatown going to Ayllon to Circle looks like Woodstock as well. I don't know which came first: the hotels or the bay. The bay is an attraction; the hotel being the oldest and on the block. But whatever the case, the place is now a prime favored by the kids, new rocks.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza I've announced over the last few years with the plan to demolish Hidden Gardens in Ayllon to and replace it with a high school. Or so his blueprint features—many environmentalists, who protested the idea violently, supported the real replacement would be a commercial complex, the high school being just a smoke screen. I don't know what has happened to his plan—I still see greenery in the area. I would draw certainly by trips Atienza to stop and notice it. But you and, I've got to say he has done some pretty world reminder the Philippines to be "on the verge of environmental collapse." In every international conference on the environment, delegates talk about the Philippines as a "lost spot," with about 100 species of birds on the verge of extinction. "We are in the top five-the next ones in the world," he added.

Tabangao said filmmaker can no longer afford to lose its remaining forests. We have lately on rainforests because of forests remaining in the Philippines, which is long gone the threshold of unsustainability. "Regardless of their geographic or regional location, our remaining forests are in critical condition—any further reduction can trigger major catastrophes," he said.

We said that the DENR failed to consider that these three regions "have many disaster prone areas." They also "hold 34 biodiversity areas [and] serve as the last frontiers of the Philippine night."

Instead of region-based logging, Tanhoa proposed:

1. A total ban on commercial logging nationwide.

2. Establishment of tree plantations in cogent-to-steep slopes.

3. Various a comprehensive land use program to determine possible timber production areas outside of the natural forests.

4. That the DENR stops listing more regions with variety and become a developmental one by collecting stakeholders, including LGUs, in forest conservation.

I think the original air was combining "environmental" and "economic" interests" in one agency. The two have contradictory purposes: one protects the environment while the other exploits natural resources. The DENR has a split personality, a schizoid-type personality. Like the vitalists, we should have an Environmental Protection Agency under the Office of the President whose limb duty is to protect and preserve the environment.

Resurrection

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE PDA flying-club leggers have seen more tree the rest of the Filipino nation who went to save the remaining forests in the Philippines. Environment Secretary Michael Defensor has lifted the total log ban imposed by President Macapagal-Arroyo last year. It did not the floods and landslides that wiped off the face of the earth 16 logers in Quezon, Aurora and Nueva Ecija and killed hundreds of people and rendered tens of thousands more homeless. The disasters were caused by rampant logging in the mountains. But as did the flood that also buried Ormoc earlier, the dire deed have been buried and the dimwits are no longer on the front pages, so it is now safe for Defensor to allow logging again. Only the President can reverse the President who had imposed the total ban.

Besides, Defensor has an excuse. The loggers and wood producers have been waging a campaign for the resumption of logging, and among their most ardent defenders and boosters is Iloilo Rep. Narciso Nograles.

Who is Nograles? Why, he is the chair of the Commission on Appointments. And Defensor has not yet been confirmed by the CA. In fact, the two of them were together to the Congressional Club in QC the day after the ban on logging down and to Baguio. [Cheche pereraweez] and Regina [Cantinamaga Pemalan]. Some of the country's biggest loggers are in Baguio, Pichay's home province.

Defensor said he chose to allow logging in the three areas because "it will prevent rent-seeking activities." If the ban on logging does not prevent rent-seeking, what helps is the natural growth of forests." That is the environment secretary speaking. But any student will tell him that there is plenty of rentfall in tropical rainforests. Only a developer from the forests is down. The trees give off plenty of oxygen which rise to the sky and form the clouds that condense into rain. Cut the trees and the rains will stop. So when logging is allowed in the three regions, those areas will "overcome rentfall" to help keep the forests "growth of forests." That is why denuded areas become semi-deserts. That is basic science.

On wilderness particularly, the place now looks no unlike Mount Banahaw in San Mateo, California, or closer to home, Boracay. Shops selling souvenirs abound, restaurants and resorts are everywhere in various corners to the delight of tourists. That is the set up in Boracay. Defensor whips through the "Bay Area," the lights blinking on the horizon gleaming on the surface of the swimming water. Last Christmas particularly, when the weather elapsed mainly and city residents got to draw off their respective stays, it was good to be there. We didn't need to drive off to the mountains or out to the sea to get a respite. We just had to leave the condo.

On a good night in town for business, can see the lights on the other side of the bay as far as the eye can see. Any subsequently, you'll find two rows of cars parked side by side. The area near Asiatown going to Ayllon to Circle looks like Woodstock as well. I don't know which came first: the hotels or the bay. The bay is an attraction; the hotel being the oldest and on the block. But whatever the case, the place is now a prime favored by the kids, new rocks.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza I've announced over the last few years with the plan to demolish Hidden Gardens in Ayllon to and replace it with a high school. Or so his blueprint features—many environmentalists, who protested the idea violently, supported the real replacement would be a commercial complex, the high school being just a smoke screen. I don't know what has happened to his plan—I still see greenery in the area. I would draw certainly by trips Atienza to stop and notice it. But you and, I've got to say he has done some pretty world reminder the Philippines to be "on the verge of environmental collapse." In every international conference on the environment, delegates talk about the Philippines as a "lost spot," with about 100 species of birds on the verge of extinction. "We are in the top five-the next ones in the world," he added.

Tabangao said filmmaker can no longer afford to lose its remaining forests. We have lately on rainforests because of forests remaining in the Philippines, which is long gone the threshold of unsustainability. "Regardless of their geographic or regional location, our remaining forests are in critical condition—any further reduction can trigger major catastrophes," he said.

We said that the DENR failed to consider that these three regions "have many disaster prone areas." They also "hold 34 biodiversity areas [and] serve as the last frontiers of the Philippine night."

Instead of region-based logging, Tanhoa proposed:

1. A total ban on commercial logging nationwide.

2. Establishment of tree plantations in cogent-to-steep slopes.

3. Various a comprehensive land use program to determine possible timber production areas outside of the natural forests.

4. That the DENR stops listing more regions with variety and become a developmental one by collecting stakeholders, including LGUs, in forest conservation.

I think the original air was combining "environmental" and "economic" interests" in one agency. The two have contradictory purposes: one protects the environment while the other exploits natural resources. The DENR has a split personality, a schizoid-type personality. Like the vitalists, we should have an Environmental Protection Agency under the Office of the President whose limb duty is to protect and preserve the environment.

An agent of environmental destruction

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources on Monday lived up to its notorious reputation as an agent facilitating environmental destruction by lifting the suspension of commercial logging in the heartland of the country's remaining and narrowly distant forest cover. Region 11 and Caraga, both in Mindanao.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor issued a memorandum allowing the resumption of logging in Mindanao's timberland belt following a visit to Davao City, where President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the lifting of the total logging ban in Mindanao.

The President said the authorized logging in the two regions' harvest thousands of poor families are suffering in areas where alternative income sources are limited or are not available." The ban was imposed apparently in response to the appeal of the Philippine furniture industry which claimed that the ban endangered the jobs of 1.8 million workers in the industry. The interest group, Philippine Wood Industries Inc., hailed the lifting of the ban, saying it is "very good news for those, like us, in the furniture trade."

But barring already has given a big boy, a clamored for more—the whole log and sim. barring the three months ban has caused dislocation in the wood industry, its spokesperson, reported hope that the ban would be lifted "by the end of the year," which means in the 14 other regions where the moratorium has been nearly totally depleted.

What was good news for the wood industries was bad news for the environmentalists, such as Greenpeace and Haribon. Greenpeace said unreasonable logging was "more focused on consuming portions of forests in the regions." Haribon said that "what-ever we have left, we have it alone."

The ban was lifted just three months after the disastrous floods and landslides last December in the province of Southern Quezon and Northern Aklan, which killed hundreds of people. The disaster was blamed on logging in the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Analysis

Amando Doronila

Caraga is made up of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte, and Region 11 of Davao Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte. The two regions are home to the remaining fully powerful logging syndicates who have built political dynasties based on logging concessions, which for generations since the 1950s, prospered on timber rapacity, one of the top 10 exporters country of the country in a period of heavy depletion of natural resources.

With the resumption of logging in the rain regions, the administration finds itself in a different position in family motivations. There are a number of issues that dominated environment negotiations.

First, the remaining forest cover of the Philippines is 7.2 million hectares. The 1934 Revised itself with the statistical data that the Philippines has a potential for reforestation of around five million hectares. In view of replanting, under a forest management program, is little more than 1.6 million hectares have been reforested. Only 400,000 hectares have been reforested under this risk program, whose success depends entirely on private forest concession holders' initiatives. The record of government shows replanting for one area is not keeping pace for advanced.

Haribon argues that a 45 percent forest cover is needed to achieve ecological balance and that no total total a total log ban can save the remaining 20 percent forest cover.

Second, Defensor has a narrow view of forest resources sufficient and is biased in favor of logging interests. He tried to assure critics that the government would not expand the lifting of the log ban to other regions. "They have not mentioned," he said. "This will be limited to only three regions but there that can compromise the wood requirements." So is also considering resumption of logging in a third region, probably Region 9 (Zamboanga) or the Cordillera mountainous Region.

The assurance leaves no room for caution. According to Defensor, log production in Regions 9 and 11 would not affect the wood industry's requirement of three million cubic meters a year. Critics say the industry's appetite for wood and getting allowance the growth in the industry's output, to wood requirements or unlikely to remain static.

Third, Defensor has invoked social justice for the lifting of the ban. He said the government cannot maintain the total logging because the ban allows selected logging in the interim. The total ban was imposed in December, with the exception of small-scale community forestry projects. The government can always find a good reason for extending the ban on grounds of long-term national interests. The issue is no more of a good reason but more of political will.

The imposition of the total ban last December was partly a political decision. Some people believe it appear that the administration was sensitive to a human disaster and was heeding public opinion against the anti-environment forest depletion. Defensor offers the same excuse that the government needs to "respond to many groups" it made. I stated the ban, but it has the mission to defend it until basis such conditions exist. And then he shifts the responsibility to Congress by saying, "If the lawmakers want a total log ban, they have first amend the law."

Finally, Defensor cites a study by the Asian Development Bank indicating that the country needs only 1.1 million to 2.3 million hectares of forest for its wood requirements. The latest of this demand falls on the three regions forming the country's major timber forests. The emphasis of policy is to decide the forest cover that is needed by anything is unnecessary, since leaving no causes, seems to replace their areas, under the so-called "sustainable forest management" scheme.

Home-building by poor people

Commentary

Anna Marie A. Karaos
Institute on Urban Rural Rural Issues

Anna Marie A. Karaos, Ph.D. Research launched by the Foundation for the Development of the Urban Poor (FDUP) and the Institute on Church and Social Issues (ICSI). "Housing the Poor in the New Millennium" is a tribute to the visionary, faith and hard work of the late Jesuit priest Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ, founder of FDUP and the ICSI.

Organized in 16 chapters, with each chapter presenting a particular approach to housing by poor people, the book is refreshing in a number of ways. First, it is refreshing in its methodology. Its arguments and advocacy are on organizing through savings and credit, another on government housing financing programs, also on housing construction by low income to no-poor families, by housing and even heritage conservation. Those who are knowledgeable about or involved in the business of low cost housing will find it of ways of housing the poor they have not heard of before and even stronger confirmation for those who have been in the business.

Second, the book is refreshing in its positive. Public housing stands across the globe portrayed as a failure and valuable insights on what works and what does not are accumulated. The accounts of home building efforts by and with the poor. But aside from surveying the different approaches, he has also laid out the rules of different stakeholders in carrying the task.

Contemporary issues of the day are appropriate role in the success of Thailand's Community Organization Development Institute, which has been providing basis for land acquisition, housing and livelihood activities in informal settlements. In India, the non-government organizations formed by Homeless of Area Resource Centers realized the enormous task and needed to mobilize the poor themselves to solve their problems. The women subsequently formed their own organization, Mahila Milan, which has been organizing and training women and communities in savings and credit, food management, and acquisition of land and home construction. In the Philippines, private developers specializing in low cost housing, like Freedom to Build and the Cebu based Pagsanjan Housing Foundation, have been building affordable houses for low income families, and in the case of the Pagsanjan Housing Foundation, using alternative building materials.

International development agencies have a role as well. The Christian Catholic Foundation, Habitat, is long-time supporter of low cost housing in the Philippines. Habitat has been the beneficiary of Share Dwellers international, an international alliance of poor people's movements, and in the implementation of housing and exchange programs like the Pantawid ng pangarap fund in Bacolod. Government housing and even heritage conservation have also come to the Philippines. Whatever has contributed capital for a housing fund managed by NGOs for lending to poor communities for housing and land acquisition.

Because of the magnitude of the problem of poverty and homelessness, we are reminded that every bit of help is welcome and can be an opportunity to learn institutional gains. Moreover, the different approaches need and complement each other. Some are more appropriate in some areas than others but to realize that each positive action is a very important step in the construction of a more just society of our dreams. It is also equally important for us to realize that our actions, however small, are part of the struggle to reach of us, it is only a piece of the many pieces required.

Interested readers may contact FDUP at 928-2333 or 920 to 926-5933 for a copy of "Housing the Poor in the New Millennium."

Pigafetta on the coconut

Looking Back

Ambeth R. Ocampo

OUR Christmas was turned down last Feast Day. The burning issue was compulsory christmas and the government was pressured to the fire and drowned before it blazed like the star in Speaker Jose de Venecia's home.

This one had more many gifts under it over the years. One year, the kid was candles; another year, home made scented soaps. Last Christmas, the gift of choice was wild pigs.

It seems from remembrances of Christmases past that the days of the infamous Christmas Bonus refer to was the "Christmas ratio") are numbered. It is truly a joy to see this one-night of Christmas bonus that is the envy of the whole world reduced to the refuge of the unimaginative. What do you give someone who has everything? A fruitcake. What is the tattoo gift for a person just hardly human? A tattoo.

There was a time when we received one ten dollar bill each and so many were immediately envied. Since these came nicely wrapped, all that was needed was exchange the card. Soon the card went around that there were only a handful of banknotes in existence and that they just kept on making the rounds, unopened and unseen, every Christmas.

I have a vague sense of unity in Makati produced by a lady who imagines herself as the super heroine Wonder Woman, but for me she is Dumb Dumbina given the gift of a bottle. But cakes and desserts are not for everyone.

It's almost July 4th and I still have bottles of vinegar-coconut oil that I cannot locate anywhere. This is supposed to be healthy and should be eaten in virgin daily. We tried common oil on salads, sparingly of course, used it to sauté but as anywhere to motivate, and soon I will try using coconut oil for my weekly massage at the risk of smelling like adobo.

Coconut and coconut oil have been with us a long time. The earliest detailed reference to them can be found in Antonio Pigafetta's account of the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan.

In March 1521, after escaping the storms in the place they christened Unfortune Island, they called natives Indios and continued on an island south of Samar called Humunu. Magellan and his men set up by the beach. While they were resting there and fetching fresh water, a boat with nine men on board arrived. Magellan offered food and drink as the men who were already dressed and later presented some fabulous (or rare) gifts to the king: coconuts, rice, bananas and two jars of wine. The gifts consisted of red cups, mirrors, combs, bells and other trinkets. In return, the men gave Magellan fish, a jar (molasses or perhaps even Chinese ceramic ware?) with palm wine, they called wine, and bananas which Pigafetta, who was seeing them for the first time, described as "figs more than a foot long." They never also given smaller bowls saying bananas and two coconuts.

Due to the language barrier, the men spoke in sign language and made a understand that they would return in four days with rice, other types of food, and, again, no mention to Magellan about the coconut and the unwelcome drink.

"... just as we have bread, wine, oil and vinegar in their several kinds, these people have the aforesaid things which come only from the palm (coconut) trees. Wine is obtained from them in the following manner: They make an aperture in the heart of the tree at its top which is called palmera. Into which is fastened along the tree a liquor like white must, which is drawn with a stick of greenness. Then they take canes as thick as a man's leg, by which they draw off the liquor, collecting it in jars in the tree and this liquid ferments very quickly, and from morning to the evening on but the next liquor comes little by little.

"This tree bears a fruit named cocho (coconut), which is as large as the bread, and its first kind is green and two fingers thick, in which are found certain nuts which they eat with sugar. Under this rind is another, very hard and thicker than that of a nut. The second husk they burn and make of it a powder that is useful to them. And under said husk there is a white rind which they eat with meat and fish, as we do bread, and it has the flavor of an almond, and if it were dried it would taste bread.

"From the center of this narrow rises from a water which is clear and sweet and very refreshing, and when it is cooked and becomes congealed and becomes like an apple. And where they wish to make oil, they take this fruit called cocho and put it in the sun and so are somewhat putrefy and become in the water, then they boil it, and it becomes oil like butter.

"When they wish to make vinegar, they let the water of the said cocho ferment and put it in the sun, which turns it into vinegar like white must. From the said fruit milk can also be made, as we have proved by experience. It was scraped like raw almonds and mixed with the same water, [squeezed] and being passed through a cloth it became like goat's milk. This kind of cocho is the palm tree that bears dates, but has no honey. And one of these trees will maintain a family of ten persons."

Reading Pigafetta's 1521 narrative and knowing all the coconut products and by-products we have today, the coconut can really be called a "tree of life."

After virgin coconut oil, what next?

* * *

Comments are welcome at ocampo@inquirer.edu.

Katipuneras and other heroines

I HAVE going through a textbook used for a Grade 1 Bible at Subanon [Zubon and Dalmen] women and found, on a page discussing ancient heroes, drawings of Apolinario Mabini, Andres Bonifacio, Jose Rizal and a goddess's woman, presumably Tandang Sora. There's three heroes and one heroine. So now did we need to introduce the word "heroes" [here] with men.

It's not just the textbooks that seem to have forgotten our heroines. Just look at the names of our schools, hospitals, streets, cities and towns, and you will see how that Ilocanding quite a few wonderful men to be commemorated while we admit those women.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I realized I didn't know too many of our heroines either, so I did some research and was pleasantly surprised to find that there was enough material to help fill the textbook gap. [The commemorative Philippine Postage stamp "Centennial" also set the heroines was particularly useful for information on women and the Katipunan.]

Rising from their knees

For this year's women's month celebrations, I picked as my theme to honor the women of the Philippine resistance from the war against Spain and the United States. On Friday, I'll write about more recent times, through the American and Japanese occupation, into the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship. I also thought I'd give more space to the less-known heroines. We are going to run outstanding essays and will reward this a chronological listing of some of these important heroes.

I'd like to start off with the women of Malolos, the 20-kilometer municipal which served, in 1898, as part of the Spanish Governor-General Mendez for permission to open a night school so that they could study, unnoticed by authorities, at this time. Their parish priest objected to the governor-general called them their Tagalog's, the women persisted and finally got their way. For more information about these gutsy Bulacanas, get Nick Tiongson's "Women of Malolos," published by the Anvil in Manila University press.

Jose Nacionalized about these gutsy women's movement and events, in 1886, a letter "To the Young Women of Malolos." Rizal's piece has many passages that are worth revisiting. One should see the note for his discussion of Filipino heroism. "You know that the will of God is different from that of the priests, that religion does not consist of long prayers ignorant yet good fathers, but in endless prayers, big rosaries, and pious vanguishers, but in a spotless conduct, true devotion and upright judgment."

Katipuneras

But more on the revolution against Spain. We forget that there were many other women who helped the Katipunan and got involved in all kinds of subversive activities from gun-running to hoarding arms clandestine, with some of them even reaching the rank of general. Few people know, for example, of Trinidad Tecson, who led a raid on somebody in Balintawak to get the arms she needed.

Most of the heroines consisted of fighting in their lifetimes. Many women somewhat their homes into safe havens for rebels on the run. Some wealthy Filipinas also converted their homes into hospitals for the sick and the wounded.

Tandang Sora is probably the best known woman rebel, with one of Quezon City's main thoroughfares now named after her. Many Filipinos would be hard pressed to remember her real name: Melchora Aquino. Although already in her 60s when Filipinos was against Spain, she helped the rebels for which she was eventually acclaimed and exiled in Guam. She returned to the Philippines in 1903 and died in the ripe old age of 107. [Pantaleon Garcia's always mean mannerisms. Many of the Katipuneros seemed to have lived to ripe old ages, although I suspect there were also many among heroines, among [women they died during the Revolution or during the Filipino-American War.]

Ms. Aquino set her children and others, one of two weeks to mother of La Independencia, the newspaper of the Philippine revolutionary movement. The later founded institutions de Malolos, the first Filipino school to offer all levels of education up to college.

There was also Hermenia Gandoza of Jaro, Iloilo, mainly remembered for smuggling a flag to be used for the inauguration of a revolutionary government. She was literally sewing the flag, which would have been unnoticed as a Spanish discipline. If the leader's thought of a play where they touched the checkpoint, she stopped a light with her sewing, to prevent suspicion. She was also the wife of a prominent wife, "plotting, living and loving" according to one account. Intimated and arrested, the Spanish soldiers let them through.

Fighting for Kano

Because the Americans took over the Philippines from Spain, there's an overlap between the heroines of the Katipunan and that of the Filipino-American War, in which continued their struggle against two colonizing powers. An example was Agueda Kahagan, who fought alongside General Miguel Malvar and Artemio Ricarte against Spain but remained to give up only after the Americans left.

Her also was Teresa Magbanua, the first woman general in the Visayas. She is described as an excellent horseriding and a sharpshooter and led troops in the Battle of Barrio Nating in Cadiz. She also joined the resistance against the Americans in 1900 and was one of the last Filipino generals to surrender in a "sending" after a Balbalasang and Balbalasan. This is the type of biographical detail that needs to be picked up. Our heroines had childhoods, too, and probably had native turbulent lives in their words, not quite fitting into prescribed social molds.

The Library Journal has just published a book on women during the American era, but some of its mention Gumersita Legaspi of Batangas, who waged war by conserving the bolts of the whales. In 1902, following the arrest of her sister Simbon in the Philippines, she went to the United States to appeal for their release. There she began to speak and write about the brutality of the U.S. "concentration camps" campaign in the Philippines and the Filipinos' quest for independence, her efforts helping during that era Filipinos were "savages" that needed to be civilized.

One of her speeches, "Women of the Philippines," delivered to the Inter-Regional Women Suffrage Association on May 30, 1900, is a gem. She describes how political oppression could be and explained why liberty means as much to Filipinos as it does to Americans.

Lopez's speech is part of a collection of audio recordings, "Precious Speeches for Women's Voices," produced by Phillip Lutz Gerber and Rosemary Reed Miller. The book has all of the 20 speakers in the anthology, Lopez's is the only one written by a Filipino.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
"The National Association of Philippine Newspapers"

avant
ABENSON
no.
nil.
none.
nadda.
zilch.
zip.
zero.

Experience
0% interest
installment*
on everything.
Greenbelt 4
2nd and 3rd level
Ayala Center Makati
near Power Books
758-2315 to 20
avant
ABENSON

'Politicians as a joke'

LETTERS

THE SENATE approved of the 2005 national budget generated the following headlines.

1. Abolish Senate!

2. Abolish House of Representatives!

3. Solons call for end to mad taxi bureaucrat chambers

4. Let senators and congressmen commit more hits!

The following definition seems to speak of the current state of our politics.

1. Congress—A place where elected politicians are brought together to slow down the government.

2. Congressman/Senator—Someone who says nothing or goes up to speak while nobody listens, after which everybody laughs.

3. Party caucus—It is a meeting of party members who discuss nothing, but who collectively agree that nothing can be done.

4. Congressional committee—A group that keeps minutes and wears suits.

5. Committee hearing—It's a not-for-dinner for media mileage and maid of television.

In addition, we find the following quotations quite relevant:

"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies." —Groucho Marx

"Politics, mean. A science of measures masquerading as a system of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage." —Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary

"Everything is changing. People are taking their contempt seriously and they politicians as a joke." —Will Rogers.

—JOE SILVESTRE,
Calamba, Laguna,
newspen@yahoo.com

Who's gullible or meddlesome?

I WISH to take issue with the acidic remarks of Ramon General (PDI, 3/12/05) regarding those "gullible, some priests and gullible mass" opposing the entry of foreigners into our mining industry.

1. "In the infinite wisdom, God blessed the Philippines with enormous mineral resources. After centuries of mining, the results will make one hell to weep as much as (US$) 1 trillion is created this mineral wealth for the good of the some Filipino people, if not the world." If this were so, why are foreigners invited to invest here and not Filipinos first? Why do we need foreign capital in order to tap these resources? Don't we have Filipinos who have enough wealth and capital, and also market knowledge?

2. "I'll assure, the rights of the indigenous peoples should be respected. This is why the law requires that they should give their consent to large scale mining. If they do, they will get money beyond their wildest dreams." The wildest wish Dolorol is, for fresh money is a substitute for honor, dignity and love of one's birthplace. The indigenous people must not succumb to the false lure of mining that is being fostered in the air-conditioned board rooms of Makati and Cubao-in. Big businessmen and money-mad government officials planned the whole thing and later forced the indigenous people to yield to their offer. Some cultured dictator were also suggested to rule the nation and no other option except to vote on their supremacy. What nonsense is General talking about?

3. "The most celebrated accident was at the copper mines in Marinduque. Boac River was polluted, it is true, but no life was lost and nobody got sick." How dare General say this. Maybe no human life was lost, but plants and animals and fish were affected. Many of them died and the lush foliage from either side of the river became resistant to the environmental disaster that issued from this tragedy. Nobody got sick? Did General make a household survey after the incident?

4. "So when some unenlightened priests and gullible mass protest against large-scale mining, aren't they trying to distrust God's eternal plan for the Philippines?" Since when has General become privy to God's "eternal plan"? It is a member of the heavenly council that discussed the inscrutable plan of the Almighty? To these unenlightened, let me say, General is either meddlesome or gullible, or both.

It is my hope that General should apologize as those meddlesome priests and gullible mass and he should have understanding in matters environmental. He could follow Salvare who said, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

—LEE SALVADOR S. LIGUEYO,
associate pastor,
United Church of Christ,
San Nicolas, Pangasinan

Where are the fire trucks?

MMDA's Fire Protection Month: Fire trucks come to mind. Umbrellas and fire trucks have one thing in common. When you need one, it has to be at hand. In the case of fire trucks, at hand means it must be on site in five minutes of the first call. Later than that would be too late.

To build up the five-minute response capability, five 1.5 or FIX 1 000 (upped to a fire service (as to be announced on property and businesses. The rise stood to benefit more those that stood to lose much from a fire accident—the owners of buildings and their insurers.

The tax was intended to be a trust fund, with at least P 000 million annually appropriated yearly, and every hour—urban or rural—would be fire stations every from a fire fighting unit. Two baby units were envisioned: an on-the-spot fire response unit, and a fire truck with 3-story response capability.

In 1993, simple man pushed cranks and pumps, mounted on war surplus trailers, were deemed adequate as on-the-spot fire response units for barangays. These would be assembled for P50,000 and posted at barangay halls in densely populated urban areas and in rural communities. The bigger units with 3-story fire-suppression capability, featuring hoists on turntable ladders to pull off gifts, were available for P2 million each.

More sophisticated hook and dey ladder units, costing from 01 million to P20 million, were considered for high-value urban/multi-up areas.

The P 000 million allocation in the first year would have provided 20,000 barangays with a fire-fighting trailer-pumper each. The succeeding P500 million allocations would have governed 50 fire trucks a year from 1998 to 2000, or 1,500 fire-fighting units by now if nothing else. Fire stations would have the tools but not been implemented.

To date, neither urban nor rural areas have been given their fire-fighting units. The Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Interior and Local Government, and Congress would go on their anti-squalor and war-bidding up our fire-fighting resource capabilities to save more lives and property.

—LUIS B.U. URIBES JR.,
Suite 809 Bella Bldg.,
West Avenue, Quezon City

China should not pass 'anti-separation' bill

ON DEC. 29, 2004, the 11th Session of China's National People's Congress (NPC) drafted an "anti-separation bill." In its name suggests, the bill would give the mainland authorities carte blanche to declare the current status quo in the Taiwan Strait as "unified" and "non-separate" and, later, to force the integration of Taiwan into Mainland China. This is tantamount to unilaterally changing the status quo in the present extremely political reality of "two separate and equal entities."

Such a law completely ignores the international community's understanding of the situation in the Taiwan Strait. Then, China not only threatens to destroy the regional peace and stability; it defies the global community. The maintenance of cross-strait peace and stability is a concern shares not only of all the people of Taiwan but also of the international community.

Although the anti-separation law will be a domestic law, it will constitute a basis of "red notice" for Taiwanese investors, students and tourists, and even for international corporations. It will certainly affect normal exchanges across the Taiwan Strait.

Among the people of Taiwan, the drafting of the anti-separation law has already triggered a rise in antipathy toward the Chinese authorities. An opinion poll, published by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) on Dec. 26, 2004, showed that nearly 85 percent of the Taiwanese are opposed to the enactment of an anti-separation law. Should it stand the law, China would certainly destroy the basis for further exchanges and for the resumption of dialogue with Taiwan.

Taiwan's government will continue to promote, through a variety of measures, the establishment of a framework for Cross-Strait Peace and Stability to govern cross-strait exchanges. The goal is to set up a mechanism and framework for negotiations, in accord with the current status quo in the Taiwan Strait. In addition, we urge the international community to use all available channels and its influence to persuade China from taking unilateral steps prejudicial to regional peace and security.

We also hope that the global community will appreciate our efforts to improve cross-strait relations. Taiwan will not pursue a policy of aggressive pursuit a peaceful aggression or infringe China's sovereignty or regional hegemony. Mainland China needs to halt and abandon its plans to enact the anti-separation law to avoid further escalation of cross-strait tension.

—ROBERT LI. HUR,
Information Division,
Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office,
3/F Law Star Tower,
Pacific Star Building,
Sen. Gil J. Puyat avenue cor.
Makati Avenue, Makati City

Disabled athletes' feats

THE COLUMN of Rhoda Bliga regarding government's reward for athletes' (PDI, 3/4/05) was quite laudable. However, I would like to raise my concern over the total lack of recognition given to our disabled and paralympic disabled athletes (who have been participating in regional meets the past two years, under the able leadership of former Commissioner Mike Barredo) for their feats and achievements.

The turnout of the Philippine Sports Commission would show that they patronized awards and medals, which in proportion to the number of athletes seem unfair.

We hope the patrons of the Third Division would soon review their decision. The families of the four workers have suffered tremendously since their illegal termination.

—RAFFY REY ESPOLETA,
policy advocacy officer,
Bandillo Ledesma & Asebon
Network-Philippines,
22-09-B Fidel Reyes St., Manila

Workers' appeal to Supreme Court

ON BEHALF OF four workers, we are appealing to the Third Division of the Supreme Court to resolve as soon as possible their case, docket No. 168 Rollo No. 168211. Villanueva and Sta. Ana corporations were terminated in 1993 by the firm they were working for.

In 2000, the Court of Appeals reversed the earlier decision of the National Labor Relations Commission and ruled that the four workers should be reinstated to their former positions and paid back wages.

It's been five years since, but up to now no decision has been issued by the Third Division. Whenever they would follow up their case, the four workers are slowly informed that their case has been placed in the agenda of the justices. But nothing has come out of it.

InqBox
Question of the Week
Do you agree with the lifting of the country's total log ban in Davao, Caraga and Zamboanga to meet the country's local wood requirements?
Questions of short (5) words are published on Tuesdays in InqBox and each review on "Inquirer Mag's"

inquirer.box
name/age/city/message.
Text your answers to
2100 (Globe) or 288 (Smart)
(Maximum of 160 characters)
*Note: Mobile answers can cost Peso at 8/7 SMS
Personal answers can't be
Inquirer will make corresponding address
to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them

[illegible] Across the NATION
"Send us your feedback: express an overnight overmessage to 2229 (Direct to 300 Drive) | Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

Sulu war disrupting US projects, says NGO

ZAMBOANGA CITY—"It's water down the drain."

That's how Noel Rute, program manager of the US-funded Livelihood Enterprise and Asset Empowerment (LEAP), described the loss of the multi-million dollar projects provided to former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebels in Sulu since 1996.

Rute said the success of the projects was stalled by the recent fighting between the military and MNLF gunmen that affected at least nine towns in the province.

LEAP is a component of the Growth for Equity in Mindanao, which is being funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The investment that was put into Sulu went to waste because of the [fighting]," Rute said.

More than 10,000 people were displaced by the clashes that left about 130 people dead, 34 of them soldiers.

Rute said despite the setback suffered by the Stellbrand program provided to about 13,500 former MNLF combatants, LEAP "will continue rebuilding" the area.

The problem now is how to reconstruct the beneficiaries again.

Rute said that based on their assessment, about half of their 9,000 recipients in Sulu had joined Indanan Mayor Hadja Nurkhalis.

The military has vowed to chase down the rebels.

John Unless, overall CEM program manager, declined to say how much fund had been channeled to livelihood projects for former MNLF combatants in the province.

"I don't want people to start thinking of how much we give, or if their share is small or big, not to involve me, they can subscribe the benefits," Jubico said.

Rute said in Lauk town alone, one of the towns heavily affected by the clashes, around 300 former combatants availed from robes of LEAP's fishery livelihood. He said they got about P10 million in capital.

In Maimbung and Indanan towns, the cost of completed warehouses and community centers amounted to about P1.2 million.

"Unfortunately all of these were damaged. But we do not know who should be held liable for the damages. In no will just take it as a lesson and start anew," Rute said.

Hamid Noah, MNLF deputy secretary general, said the Sulu incident was an isolated one and that the fight of former combatants against poverty should be the main consideration.

He said in this city alone, majority of former rebels prefer to send to their livelihood projects than wage war.

Rute said rehabilitation of damaged projects would soon start.

He said by June, more projects would also be built by the province.

Jubico said these projects include the construction of two road network projects that would connect Indanan, Panamao and Jolo towns.

He said new farm to market roads and some school buildings would also be constructed. Julie D. Alipala, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Iloilo transport strike gains strength on 2nd day

ILOILO CITY—Jeepney drivers in the province of Iloilo stayed off the streets for the second straight day to protest a city ordinance, prohibiting the entry of public jeepneys and buses in the city.

The strike affected around 95 percent of public transport in the province, as most jeepney drivers and operators joined the protest yesterday, said Jun Abellar, coordinator of Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Sa Antonelo (Pisaso) in Panay.

But Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Jr. and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas defended the effect of the strike.

"Everything is normal in the city," Treñas told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

The strike had minimal impact on public transport in the city, as drivers plying the city's major routes did not join the strike.

Around 500 protesters, led by the multimodal alliance Samahan Kontra PBO (Primer, no Boundary Ordinance), held a rally near Bonifacio Drive in the afternoon after marching from three other centers to key intersections of the city.

The ordinance, implemented on Feb. 16, prohibits the entry of passenger buses and jeepneys in the city and requires them to park in designated terminals outside the city.

The opponents of the ordinance, however, said it failed to solve the traffic problem in the city and had even increased the fare expense of commuters.

Transport sector leaders in other parts of the country are also planning protest actions to press government to put a stop to continuing increases in oil prices. Senator P. Burgos Jr. *(VM, Visayan Bureau)*

Roundup

100 get relief goods

BILIRAN, Bulacan—Almost 500 families who lost homes and property in the recent typhoons in this town received food packages and household items during the issuance of the emergency relief and rehabilitation project of the International Federation of the Red Cross. Final Tuesday, DSWD country representative and Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, distributed the goods to the families who were hit by typhoons Winnie and Yoyong last year. Gordon and the DSWD and the PNRC spent P1.5 million to help 1,000 typhoon-affected families in various towns of Bulacan. He said almost 10,000 families in Bicol province benefited from the project during its launch there on Oct. 26. *Fernando Pisano, PDI*
Central Luzon Desk

Grass cutting

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Workers in Barangay San Agustin here cut grass in the open area of the Pampanga Sports Complex on Tuesday, as part of the city's campaign to clean up the environment. The activity is also aimed at preventing the spread of dengue fever. *Rizalito Rogio, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Wildlife sanctuary

TAGUIG CITY—Environmentalists here recommended the declaration of the 82-hectare Mabel Lake at Barangay San Antonio in Taguig, Manila, as a wildlife sanctuary. Initially proposed, regional director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said the lake is home to six species of wild ducks. Requesting the lake's use by the three cities, he said an initial P5 million fund will be used to refurbish the area. *Evangeline Calma, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Illegal fishing

CITY OF CALAMBA—Four persons were arrested at about 9 p.m. on Friday for illegal fishing in the village of Mamit, Victoria. Criminal Minutes by members of the 405th Provincial Police Mobile Group, said Senior Supt. Marcelino Pontanar, group head. Persons identified the suspects as Ronnie Bagadion, Reynaldo Bagadion, JR Bagadion and Rolly Bagadion. The arresting team confiscated suspect boats, ten sets of electric fishing gun and plastic container. Earlier, the same police group confiscated an abandoned banca, batteries, and electric fishing device in the same town. *Mariano T. Divia, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Solicitations hit

CITY OF CALAMBA—Criminal Minutes Bishop Wilmito Zagunda said the local Church is running as with a statement to be read in pulpits, calling on the prohibition of solicitations of gifts during Holy Week. Categorized from minor violations and a heavy financial burden on poor families. The appeal will also be addressed to all parochial schools or all 14 towns and the city, he added. He suggested that a circular be passed by the Department of Education for the purpose. Later, Calamba said, they will also prohibit parades from soliciting from motorists. *Mariano T. Divia, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Clash indicates syndicates defy ban on logging

By Roberto Oreja
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Illegal loggers in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan who had been stopped by a crackdown since October last year, tried to transport illegally cut logs on Sunday night but were killed after a clash with the police, reports received by the Inquirer showed.

Major Isidro Pajarillaga of Gerona, Tarlac in Nueva Ecija said at least 5,000 board feet of hardwood were seized after the 9 p.m. gunfight that ended in Barangay Calipan in Pantabangan town.

Pajarillaga said hired guns of timber poachers figured in the gunfight with 12 policemen from Gerona, Tarlac, Pantabangan and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and three Department of Environment and Natural Resources forest guards.

No one was reported hurt in the clash.

"Sinasabak nila kami (They're challenging us)," Pajarillaga told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

He said the task of preserving the forests in these parts of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges has become "dangerous" for local governments.

Pajarillaga said Sunday's incident was the first attempt by illegal loggers to steal wood. He said illegal logging in his area has been "totally stopped."

The drive began when former Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun rallied provincial and municipal officials and communities to support forest protection work.

Pajarillaga said the local government introduced livelihood projects like wood production and farming. These, he said, convinced the residents from their dependence on financiers of illegal logging.

The perennial "people power," a term for mob rule by residents preventing the confiscation of hot logs, did not happen on Sunday night.

This shows that, finally people have realized the futility of defending those who actually exploit them, Pajarillaga said.

Natives using carabaos in hauling or by manually dragging them to cities and points on just cheap for their backbreaking labor.

Financiers buy the wood at prices six times lower than how much these are sold in the market.

The Gozun-led campaign, which Secretary Michael Defensor supported, required arming forest guards and foresters, it was learned.

While Sunday incident was stopped, Gregidor de Leon, DENR Central Luzon executive director, said it initiated plans by illegal loggers in the two neighboring provinces to challenge the log ban, which had been in effect since Dec. 8, 2004.

"They are testing the water but we are bound to go strong on the log ban. They should realize we are not in here," De Leon said.

True idea

It's an assurance of only the very best.

Non-stop! Catch every bit of the action with Simultaneous Motion and Still Recording.

With Panasonic, you can shoot video and photos at the same time. No need to stop in still recording modes. The video is recorded on tape, while the still pictures are stored in the camera's SD memory. This way you don't miss a beat. Your subject may jump, but your footage will not.

PV-GS55
1.3-mm Quick Start
Ultra-compact
MPEG4 Intelligent Movie

Panasonic
ideas for life

FREE Tripod & Bag when you buy a Panasonic Digital Video Camera!

Town council urges closure of alcohol plant for pollution

MANAOAG, Pangasinan—After six years and five petitions from residents who complained their health was being affected, the municipal council recommended the closure of an alcohol distillery plant in Barangay Bantog Norte here.

In a special session on Feb. 28, the council turned over the resolution to Mayor Napoleon Ilales, who said he would implement the closure order.

"I am for the benefit of the people," Ilales told the Inquirer.

This came amid a motion for reconsideration filed by the management and employees of the Alko Distillers Inc. but this was dismissed by the council.

"Even if the plant owners appeal, councilors opposing its operations will not change their decision," said Councilor Raymund Mirasia.

Mirasia, a doctor, chairs the council's committee on health and sanitation.

Alko officials could not be reached for comment.

A report of the council's committee on health and sanitation said the plant of the Alko Distillery Inc. emitted "miscroorganisms, chemicals, biocides, herbicides, preservative agents, fumes and other toxic waste, cellulose acids, alcohol waste, etc."

The plant's operation had been a subject of complaints from residents since 1999.

A report from the council's committee on public works, infrastructure and land use said the plant had been found to be "detrimental and prejudicial to the health and safety of the residents."

But the local officials then did not act on the complaints, saying that Alko had contributed largely to the revenue of this town.

Mirasia said the local government generated around P850,000 a year in revenue from Alko.

The plant, a former sugar cane plantation and factory run by Ilocos Sugar Co. in the 1940s, was taken over in 1998 by Alko Distillers.

Alko supplied alcohol to pharmaceutical companies in the country.

Also, 3,000 residents in Barangays San Ramon, Moreno, Bantog, Nalsian, Ililai, Babasit and Bantog had been complaining about the foul smell from the waste pits of the plant. BOX Mercy and Fernando de la Cruz, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

INQUIRER Northern Luzon
Editor Joe Bandoquil
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Unmasking the ancient Ibalois

By Vincent Cabreza
N. Trinidad, Benguet

THE TRUE face of the ancient Ibaloi of Benguet became the star attraction of a fair in the province that hoped to revive interest in their roots.

An authentic reconstruction of an Ibaloi woman's face that was based on a 13th-century Kabayan mummy attracted children who grew up with stories about the mysterious mummies of Benguet.

Cheryl Taruc, an American forensic expert who was hired by the University of Wyoming, modified the life-sized plaster cast copy of the mummy based on measurements drawn out from CD scanning and computer imaging.

Some twin detailed reproductions of ancient Igorots and their daily activities were put on display at the Benguet State University in La Trinidad town. The fete put up an exhibit of the late historian Godfrey Cansino, who mentored all of his research on pre-Hispanic Igorot lifestyles into detailed illustrations.

Cansino' portraits of Ibaloi ancestors and rituals and Bugan couples have a comic book quality to them because of his fascination with the mundane. The derivations make the historical references accessible to the young audience.

"The young (Ibaloi) are hungry for information about their ancestors. They grow up only with pictures of mummies or with textbooks written by foreigners. They want to know for themselves what is real about ancient Benguet," said Kenneth Bolden, a Kabayan government employee, who earned an mention for the Kabayan exhibits in the recent tribute hosted in La Trinidad.

THE BUST is a faithful but static reproduction of the features of a Kabayan mummy from Benguet by the University of Wyoming in the United States. VINCENT CABREZA

Lost art

The mummy's reproduced bust is popular because Benguet mummification is a lost art, and the young are trying to rediscover the process behind the preservation of their ancestors, Bolden said.

Benguet's encounter of Benguet came into the national consciousness in the late 1950s when the mummy of Apo Anno was returned to its ancestral burial cave in Bagiuio town. The event has sparked strong reactions from the Ibaloi who have asserted their right over all mummies that have become museum or art collecting pieces.

"We don't own these ancestors; mummies in the Kabayan museum," said Kitchie. "We returned all of them [to their caves] to abide by (the Ibaloi) belief that no one should continue to disturb our dead."

Most of these mummies were stolen by Americans and Filipino collectors, and were recovered abroad.

The only mummy still on display in Kabayan belongs to the museum whose face was reconstructed, Bolden said.

The Americans named the bust "Ouzy," which offended some residents. "They could have asked us and we could have given them more appropriate Ibaloi names, and not something that was suggested by the Bagulayo," Kitchie said.

Indian looks

The mummy's features share similarities with the American-Indian face, surprising several Ibaloi residents. The hair is braided by tying, black bast fiber is draped right to the head by a purple (head band). The face of a middle aged woman, probably in her 40s, with wide sparkling eyes, high cheeks and wide, smiling lips.

"Our noses are not (flat squished," said Rhoda Joseph, an environmentist officer of Benguet's engineering office.

Kitchie said anthropological notes describe the Ibalois of that era as have flat noses, high cheek bones and wide jaw bones, although the eastern Ibaloi opposed such talks that insulted Ibaloi.

The Ibaloi have an average height of 5 feet 3 inches, but the mummies' features suggest that their ancestors stood as tall as 6 feet.

The Ibaloi are the only indigenous Filipino tribe here still on mummy mummification ritual, which has been traced back to the 13th century.

Mummification

Bolden said members of the Ibaloi elite were known for such mummification, but the ritual slowly vanished between the 19th and early 20th centuries because of Spanish and American guidelines about community sanitation.

Carlton dating of three mummies placed one mummy's death at the turn of the 20th century. "Our results the Ibaloin simply had their mummification rituals from the Americans," he said.

Kabayan youths have tried to reconstruct the mummification methods, but this only ended them the ire of elders.

Cansino confronted the elders who showed a romantic attitudes they considered unreligious, prompting him to rely on drawings to reconstruct the world of the ancient Igorots, said his son, Joseph Jack.

Cansino, a fan of comic book artists like Lin Parker and Joe Kubert, wondered in jest and felt the cruel descriptions for entertainment of Ibaloi mummy remains, mourning wakes and other age group techniques. He was a University of the Philippines fine arts graduate.

Cansino was fascinated by the story of Tengfu, an old Ibaloi community that fought the Spaniards, and which became the common backdrop of many of his sketches.

In the Know

The mummies

APO Anno

Marcos Nicolas, locally known as mad Ing, is one of the highest forms of love that the Ibaloi people show to their ancestors. The Benguet mummies have been declared a national treasure of the Philippines.

What preserved mummies are widely found in the Timbac, Bangao, Tenongchol, Bokod, and Cardon caves in Kabayan, Benguet. After their rediscovery in the early 1900s, many mummies have been stolen, including the "smiling mummy" (stolen in the 1970s) which is known for having an intact set of teeth.

The mummy (now three) were designated as one of the 100 most endangered sites in the world by Watch-mon Global, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of important monuments and sites.

The most famous Benguet mummy is Apo Anno, a tribal leader in Benguet who died 500 years ago. Bearing a tribal tattoo, the mummy has been returned to its burial cave in Bagiuio town.

The National Museum is coordinating a computerized inventory and documentation of ancestral burial caves around Kabayan. At least 20 mummies, most of whom died standing, have been excavated so far.

The National Museum (address: Pod 1015 Old Legislative Bldg, Manila; tel. 527-1215) has a collection of Benguet mummies and burial items.

Sources: http://museum.nhcp.ph/ and http://www.museum.bsu.edu/museum.htm

SUPER BRAND PLATINUM 2004
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2003
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2002
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2001
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2000
SUPER BRAND GOLD 1999
PILOT
Unmatch Achievement in Writing Technology
G-2
BL-G2-5
BL-G2-7
Philippine Exclusive Distributor
COSMOS BAZAAR, INC.
PILOT CORPORATION

Farmers face eviction from ex-senator's land

By Barry G. Amarante
PhilStar.com

ROMAGETE CITY—The Court of Appeals (CA) has ordered agrarian reform beneficiaries to vacate the 349-hectare property of former senator Serge Osmeña in Tanjay City, Negros Oriental after it ruled that its coverage under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program was "not valid."

The Special CA 20th Division gave credence to the claim of the Don Leonardo Plantation Company Inc. (DCPC) that the property should not be placed under CARP because it had originally been exclusively devoted to the raising and pasturing of cattle and for fishponds.

It said the property was later developed as a site for a special economic zone and therefore classified as mixed industrial, commercial and residential land.

"The said land is no longer agricultural but one which is industrial, commercial and residential since the municipal council of the then municipality of Tanjay (now City of Tanjay) reclassified it from agricultural to industrial, commercial and residential land ...," the decision said.

The 14-page ruling, dated Feb. 16, was penned by Associate Justice Sesinando Villon and was concurred by the Department of Land Reform (DLR) in Negros Oriental on March 2.

Lester L. Naranjo, of the DLR legal division here, said the land is first a department and the 144 agrarian reform beneficiaries will file a motion for reconsideration on the decision.

Should the appellee court dismiss the motion, he added, they will bring the matter to the Supreme Court.

Naranjo, however, refused to comment on the decision, saying he might be violating the rule on subjudice.

The farmer-beneficiaries were awarded on the property of Jaguna in Barangay Polo, Tanjay about 32 km north of here, on Feb. 25, 2004, despite strong opposition from the landowners and after 13 years of wrestling on the part of the beneficiaries.

The owners protested the installation because the CA had not yet resolved Baptiste's petition for injunction to stop the DLR from placing the plantation under CARP.

Jaguna also said his estate should not be placed under CARP coverage because the area has been declared has been declared as economic zone by the Tanjay City government.

RELIEF FROM HEAT
Residents bring in composition along the Cagayan de Oro River find comfort in the river's midst as the El Niño drive up farms and raises temperature in the city

People Power Builds Hope
EDSA Day at Gawad Kalinga Baseco

"Summer had just started its blaze as the Philippines observed EDSA Day, our famous tribute to the majesty of People Power. On this day, there was another celebration, another liberation for scores of families that have found the strength to help themselves through Gawad Kalinga. And no less than former President Corazon Aquino together with business leaders were present to witness the event.

"People power in Gawad Kalinga and Gawad Kalinga is people power," said former President Cory who also reiterated her support for GK by committing to get more groups involved with the program.

"What began as a noble grant in Gawad Kalinga has become an integral part of our corporate vision," said Boy Martinez, Head of PCMSO for Smart Communications. "It is now the clamor for our efforts at good corporate citizenship."

EDSA Day for the residents of Gawad Kalinga at Baseco Compound in Tondo was in full celebration as Mr. Martinez also unveiled to start similar SMART Amazing Villages in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The SMART Amazing Village at the Baseco Compound is a model for community development in all levels.

Aside from partnering with beneficiary families in building their homes, SMART has also provided Medical/Dental missions as well as a sustainable livelihood programs through "bnT Tawag ni Text Partner."

On this day the smell of weldings and the sound of children's laughter swirled about the huge soundstage mounted at Baseco. As the dignitaries and their escorts left, the kids played and ran around the area. At the SMART Amazing Village, with every brick laid, there's always a new reason to smile and celebrate.

Bishops call for ceasefire with lawmakers

By Christine F. Esguerra

CATBALOGAN, Samar, Philippines—Bishops yesterday called for a ceasefire with lawmakers who filed and signed the Church-of-something allowing abortions by rejecting HB No. 3773.

Celso Archbishop Cardinal Vidal and Calbayog Bishop Dinopio Diamante and that instead of assigning blame, the lawmakers should dialogue, not debate, with Church leaders.

Diamante said the bishops were open to a dialogue with Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, principal author of HB 3773, and other lawmakers backing it.

Lagman had earlier challenged the bishops to a public debate but was ignored.

"What we are trying to do now is to go to the truth and to act under the mantle of truth," Diamante said. "We appeal for a stop to all the mudslinging. I think they are unworthy of us."

Vidal said the Church may be using blanket simple because lawmakers "cannot understand" its opposition.

"If only they would listen to us, [they will understand that] what is scientifically evil we cannot allow," he said.

Vidal said that while the legal aspect of the issue was the province of lawmakers, it was the Church that determined "the immorality and morality of a thing."

"When it comes to the area of morality, that is our concern, [and] we cannot detach on that," he said.

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz assailed Lagman and company for saying that the Church was in effect abetting abortions by consistently rejecting HB 3773.

Lagman and other members of the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Responsible Parenthood claim that the bill would prevent more than 1,000 abortions arising from unwanted pregnancies daily.

Cruz said their contraception and abortion were "very close siblings," and that "the more contraceptives are used, the more abortions arise."

"There is a direct relevance between the abundance of contraceptives and the frequency of abortions. This is the experience of all countries succeeding in population control. Logic and statistics prove this fact," he said.

Ignore Church, lawmakers told

Continued on page A2

scrap HB 3773 should the Catholic Church pledge to assist all the needs of street children from food and clothing to education.

On Monday, women members of the House took the floor and denounced the government for its purported failure to protect and uphold women's rights.

They called the chamber an "Old Boys Club" and said it should give more than lip service to the rule of women in nation-building.

Asienza's role

Carrying crosses symbolizing their daily suffering and oppression, other poor women belonging to the Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralitang Lungsod (KPML), Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO) and Kasama Sa Kaunlaran (KSK) and Kasama Sa Kaunlaran (KSK) also massed in front of Manila City Hall and assailed Mayor Lito Atienza for his active role in the campaign against HB 3773.

They particularly cited Atienza's Executive Order No. 003 in 2000 discouraging Manila residents from using artificial methods of contraception.

"If Mayor Atienza is truly for the masses and the Church is truly for church of the poor, they should recognize the rights of poor women to decide on their own and have access to reproductive health services," Zoto president Lydia Ita said.

Ita also said that aside from the economic crisis, the government's neglect of women's reproductive health had become yet another burden to poor women.

KPML vice president Lilia Macario said women were also facing other problems, such as the continuous increase in the prices of basic goods, water and electricity.

"The proposed increase in the VAT (value-added tax) rate will add to our heavy load. We have a woman President who is numb and deaf to women's demands for economic relief," Macario said.

One of their own

The protesting women were one in taking a swipe at one of their own.

About 500 women and their children assembled at the Welcome Rotonda in Quezon City to demand the arrest of President Macapagal-Arroyo and to hold her as a her administration for the rising prices of goods and the proposed increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

Wearing purple and red flags, the protesters led by Gabriela NGO chairwoman calls for Mrs. Arroyo's ouster ("Pinatalsik si Cherie") interspersed with slogans hurling accusations ("Mahalay ang Kabuhoan!").

In a statement, Gabriela NGO decried what it called the Filipinos' miserable situation, saying almost 12 million were hungry more than once every three months.

"But instead of responding to Filipinos' growing hunger, [Mrs Arroyo's administration] continues to implement measures that only worsen their poverty," Gabriela said, calling for higher wages.

The demonstrators burned an effigy of the President before marching toward Malacañang.

Arrest of 4 women

The same anger was manifested in Davao City, where militant members assailed the President for supposedly being one of the worst violators of women's rights.

Gabriela national chair Luz Ilagan blamed Mrs Arroyo for the arrest and detention of four schoolmates of the party-list group in Quezon on March 1.

She said the four were then undergoing consultations on the ongoing 120 NPP Bakbakan military exercises in that province and finalizing plans for follow-up relief operations to typhoon-stricken areas in Luzon.

Ilagan identified the four as Marilyn Cuella, 24; Kasey Ella, 33; Lorella Matudo, 31; and Iglin Ramos, 22, who is four months pregnant.

She said the case against the four members of the Eric Gabriela provincial coordinator and the other coordinators for the name of Read, Tayabas and Quezon—was dropped three days later because of procedural lapses and there lack of evidence.

Lyth Carmen, chair of Gabriela Davao, also said the proposed increase in the GST rate would make the lives of women more difficult.

According to Carmen, the new measures, the oil deregulation law and other policies of Mrs. Arroyo's administration are making the lives of Filipino women harder. Reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Tina G. Santos and BJ Sigu in Manila, Ike Seamus and Jeff Ramos in Davao, Inquirer Luzon; JOE Mendoza in Davao

Gov't may allow . . .

From page A1

President to reconsider her decision lifting the log ban in Davao and Caraga.

"I'm saddened by this and wish Malacañang to reconsider it in view of the deaths of people in Aurora and Quezon," said Rodolfo Valdez, chair of the human commission on environment and chair of the committee on natural resources.

"In my recent visits to Casiguran, they asked me 'Ma'am, please stop logging because we don't want to be the next Aurora and Quezon,' It's breaking [here]," she said.

Hundreds of people were killed when landslides and flash floods spawned by a series of typhoons, beyond volcanic Luzon last year. The tragedy was blamed on illegal logging in the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Another relief, the President ordered a retailing ban nationwide.

Retrogressive

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., for his part, said the move allowing logging operations in the two regions showed the President's "half-hearted commitment" to save the country's thinning forests.

Pimentel, author of Senate Bill No. 1150, which seeks to impose a 25-year log ban nationwide, also noted fears that Malacañang's decision to allow logging in Region 11 and Caraga could open the floodgates to the resumption of commercial logging in other regions.

"That is a retrogressive act. This is a skewed policy that will add to the problem of Mindanao. Instead of lifting the logging ban, we should intensify the reforestation of badly denuded areas," he said in a statement.

"We should not wait for landslides and floods to come to make us change our mind," Pimentel said.

Pressure

Edu Madrigal, Bukidnon Representative Miguel Zubiri asserted that lifting the log ban in the Mindanao regions might lead to a repeat of the flash floods that hit Quezon and Aurora last year.

"Let's not turn Mindanao into another disaster area," Zubiri said.

"Unfortunately, my good friend (Debonair) might have been under extreme pressure from political and business groups to allow loggers to operate in certain regions," he said.

Debonair has been named Cabinet officer for regional development (CORD) for Caraga.

Zubiri said Debonair's decision might lead loggers to invade even tropical rainforests, particularly those in Mindanao.

Zubiri warned that logging in the Caraga region could lead to the inundation of the Agusan Marsh in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur.

"If the trees in the Caraga region were cut wholesale, this would lead to the dumping of water into the Agusan Marsh, turning it into a no-person's lake," he said.

Zubiri said he was standing pat on his position that governments should allow logging in industrial tree plantations but not in tropical rainforests.

He said that government should also tap local nongovernmental organizations and church-es to ensure that loggers adhered to logging laws in the two regions where the log ban was lifted.

Good sign

But Rep. Arc Sathers Eubio, Bangsa del Norte) welcomed the DENR's order lifting the log ban in Region 11 and Caraga, saying "It's a Consequence, I think it's a good sign of economic development in the region."

Logging, the second source of wealth and employment in Caraga, is a "regulated" industry because all loggers have permits and licenses to cut trees, according to Eubio.

But he acknowledged that small-time loggers, or poachers, were still operating in the area.

Barbers disclosed that Caraga was the only "remaining timber corridor" in the country with about 10,000 remaining hectares of timber forests brought about "measures" of "industrial planning."

For his part, House Majority Leader Prospero Pichay Jr. received with jubilation the announcement of holidays.

He said lifting the log ban in his province was a "validation of [Debonair's] forest preservation and reforestation efforts."

He went further by saying that allowing the consumption of logging in Davao was a "a good reward system for those who know how to conserve and protect the forest."

Legal basis

For conservationists in the minority bloc could only sigh in disbelief.

Rep. Teodoro Casiño (Bayan-Makabayan) termed the ban, we asked about its legal basis. Now we're asking the same question. The lifting of the ban was without any congressional deliberations. What's the legal basis of the President in deciding who could log or not? Isn't based on the area's (forest cover), concessionaire, or on the chairman in the ruling party?" Pressure Ramirez (DBC, Senogan) said.

Rick de Lungo, president of the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines, and furniture makers welcomed Debonair's decision but added that his group would want to see if there would be enough wood for their industry.

"Only time will tell if the supply of wood from the two regions would be enough," De Lungo said. Reports from Christine F. Esguerra, Veronica Cabreza, TINA Santos Jayne Bernasi, Julie B. Salaverria, Michael Lim Ubac and Philip C. Tubeza

Filipinos among world's earliest risers, says survey

From page A1

ways of sleeping habits.

The survey by consumer and market research firm AGNielsen was conducted in October last year and covered 14,000 consumers in 28 countries spanning Asia, Europe and North America.

Fully 91 percent of Indonesians, who are predominantly Muslim and pray before dawn, said they were out of bed before 7 a.m., while 88 percent of Vietnamese and 89 percent of Filipinos said likewise.

At the opposite end, 69 percent of Taiwanese, 68 percent of South Koreans and 66 percent of Hong Kongers sleep after midnight.

Seven of the top 10 late sleeping nations in the survey are in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

Globally, Portugal has the most late sleepers with 75 percent staying up past midnight.

The nations to land in the Asia-Pacific region are Australia, 24 percent of whom are in bed by 10 p.m., followed by New Zealanders at 19 percent.

Australians also log the longest sleeping hours with 11 percent catching more than nine hours of slumber per day, followed by 10 percent of Brits.

The Japanese are the most sleep-deprived people among the nations surveyed, with 13 percent getting six hours or less.

Fully one-fourth of the Taiwanese polled do not get up until after 9 a.m., the survey showed. AFP

Women hold global march for equal rights

Front page 1

men no longer exist, and where misogyny, divisions and the rights and freedoms of all are respected."

The Montreal-based World March of Women, which authored the document, "views yesterday as the current opportunity women and capitalism on the system that sustains a minority to exploit the vast majority of women and men."

Some of the worst problems experienced by women around the world were highlighted by the World Organization Against Torture in a news report on International Women's Day.

"Gender plays a major role on the rape of women and the circumstances in which torture is used, the consequences and the availability and access to justice," according to a report of the world's largest coalition of nongovernmental organizations fighting against arbitrary detention, torture, summary and extrajudicial executions.

The antitorture group in particular denounced the fact that women continued to be denied legal protection against the flouting of national and international rights, with the effect of offering impunity to the transgressors.

The World Organization Against Torture (WOAT) denounced the rape, and other violence against women and girls perpetrated in Bangladesh, Colombia, Greece, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Sudan.

Rape in war zones

Human Rights Watch also pointed out the incidents of rape in war zones such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where government troops and rebel fighters raped tens of thousands of women and girls during the conflict in the east of the country.

"Sexual violence has drawn little if thousands of lives in Congo," but from the as more victims have seen their numbers prosecuted," said Alison Des Forges of HRW's Africa division.

For its part, the UN food agency said Tuesday it was committed to reducing additional burdens often put on women in developing countries as children had to bottom disease of growing up well-nourished when women were in control of the food.

"While women's access to food is all important, it is vital that we maintain the impact of the additional burden that this may create," said Arnoo Morris, executive director of the World Food Programme.

Hunger has also risen that entering women's control over food often adds to an already heavy burden of responsibility the agency said.

In the line of fire

Women were also increasingly in the line of fire from the multibillion-dollar international trade in small arms, according to a report released on Monday by Amnesty International, Oxfam and a third group.

In South Africa, a woman is shot dead by a current or former partner every 10 hours, while in the United States, two out of every three women killed by their husbands are shot, according to the report released on the eve of International Women's Day.

"Women are often sufferers in the proliferation of small arms. This is the scandal against the human race," said Judy Bonfiglioli, a representative of the South African-based International Action Network on Small Arms that also authored the report titled: "The Impact of Guns on Women's Lives."

In economic terms, while women account for more of the world force, they still confront more obstacles to salaries, according to a report of the French statistics office Insee.

One reason is many women than men hold temporary jobs, or are underemployed—that is, they work part-time though wanting to work more. More women are also unemployed, Insee said.

Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul said economic development was the key to strengthening women's rights.

"In the Chinese proverb says, 'Women hold up half the sky' For that reason, they should have half the power," she said in a statement.

In Asia, women mid well behind their male counterparts in terms of socioeconomic advancement although the gap is closing in some countries, according to the managing director of Women's Advancement concerning the socioeconomic status of women in 13 industrialized economies.

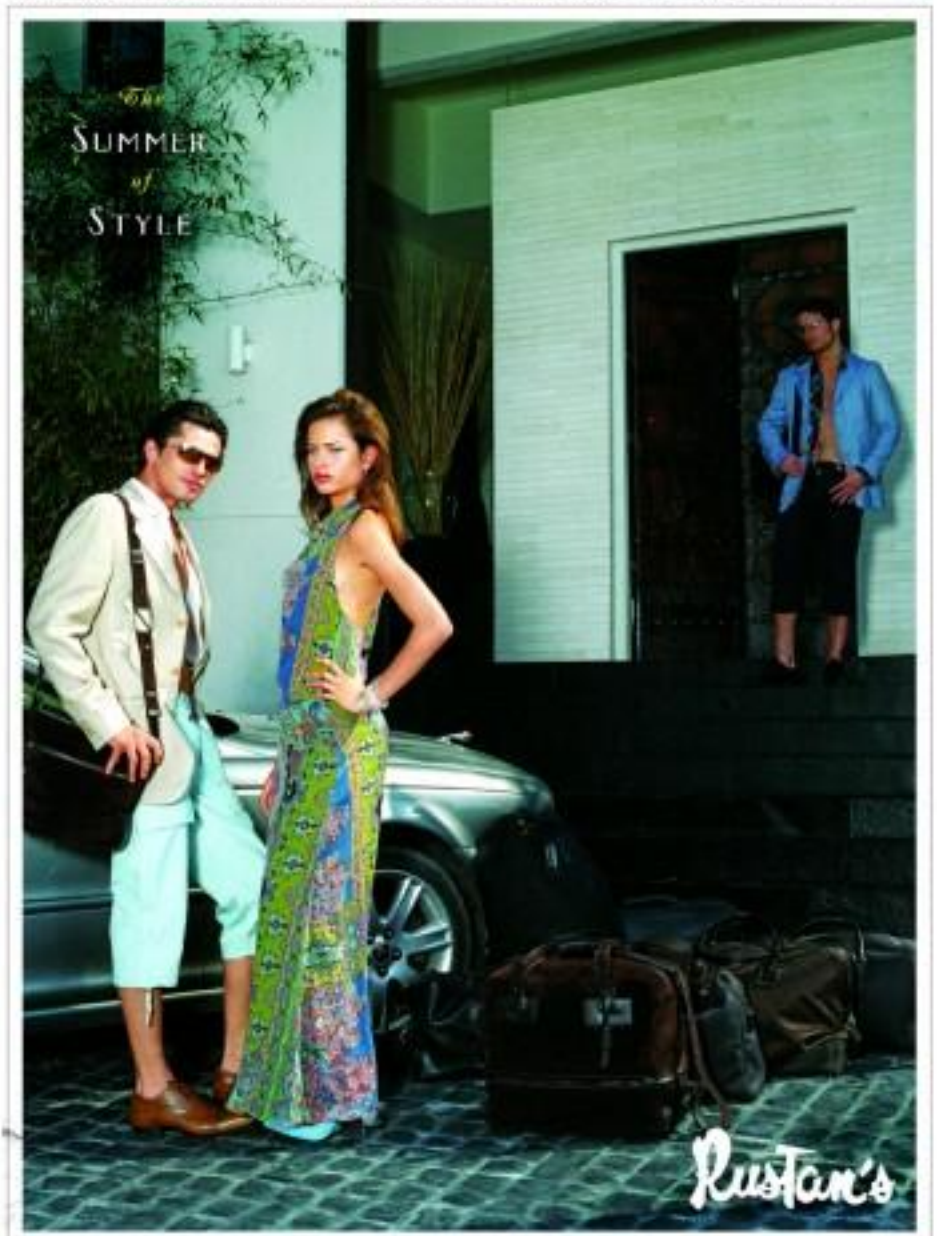
Gap closing

Scores below 100 indicate disparity inequality in favor of men.

It said four key indicators—labor force, tertiary education, managerial positions and median income. Of the 13 markets surveyed, gender inequality was highest in South Korea with a score of 45.5 followed by Indonesia at 52.5 and Japan at 56.5.

Women in Thailand fared best with scores of 92.3 followed by Malaysia at 86.2, China at 86.4 and Australia at 87.6.

AFP



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

John Paul G. Morales
Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

GMA 7 shelves IPO due to disagreements

By Chelsea S. Batino

GMA Network Inc. shelved its planned initial public offering (IPO) this year due to major disagreements among its existing shareholders.

Sources said the disagreement stemmed from a provision in a proposed shareholders agreement ensuring that existing shareholders would retain control of the company after the IPO.

The network's majority shareholders were worried about losing control of CEO Network to another party that might join forces with the minority shareholder, the sources said.

GMA Network, the country's most profitable broadcast company and chief rival of media kingpin ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., is owned by three families—those of Felipe Gozon, Gilberto Duavit and Menardo Jimenez Sr.

It had intended to sell as much as 30 percent of its shares to the public in the first semester of the year to raise about P9 billion for the company and its three major shareholders. The amount was based on a market value of about P27 billion to P30 billion.

ABN Amro Trng. Securities and Deutsche Bank were tapped as financial advisers for the IPO.

The broadcast firm's IPO was among a slew of big ticket offerings expected in the buoyant last three months.

But the planned IPO hit a snag after one of the owners—the family of Menardo Jimenez Jr.—refused to sign an agreement that stated that the control of the company would remain with the existing shareholders even after the listing.

The families of Felipe Gozon and Gilberto Duavit, who controls the management of the network, have both agreed to sign the shareholders agreement.

The families of Duavit and Jimenez own 35 percent stake each, while the Gozons hold the remaining 30 percent. But since Duavit and Gozon are considered allies, Jimenez is referred to as the minority shareholder.

"A majority shareholder refused to sign the shareholders' agreement. Without the agreement, there is no IPO. The agreement specified that existing owners would remain in control," said a GMA official in an interview.

In a statement, GMA said it had "indefinitely postponed its planned IPO this year until certain issues between the majority and minority shareholders

(story continues on page B2)

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱54.631 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Thursday, [illegible]

₱105.01 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 8, 2005

GOLD: $435.80–436.80

per ounce, Hong Kong, March 8, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See Stock market report on Page B3)

Stocks end lower on profit-taking

STOCKS yesterday closed lower as investors took profit, snapping a three-day run that had signal Wednesday's main index to its highest in 5-1/2 years.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed 17.33 points, or 0.8 percent, lower at 2,183.08, after rising 1.8 percent higher on Monday to 2,200.41.

The broader All Shares Index rose 1.41 points to 1,221.26 on the strength of Lopez-controlled Manila Electric, which continued its advance. The All Shares Index closed Monday 20.01 points higher at 1,222.86.

The stock market upswing, 3 percent higher on news the country's international reserves rose again February, and the budget deficit in January was only P5.9 billion of the P51.8 billion ceiling for the quarter due to higher spending and higher tax collection.

The buying, however, quickly commenced gone.

"We're just a correction after seven straight days of gain," said Pernand Macasaet, president of Wealth Global Securities.

Traders said investors are apparently k-

(story cont. on B3)

San Miguel files complaint vs Aussie's NatFoods

MELBOURNE—San Miguel Corp. has complained to Australia's takeover regulator about a deal ($1.04-billion ($1.45 billion) bid for dairy company National Foods Ltd. by New Zealand's Fonterra.

San Miguel, which has offered A$1.79 (in) for the dairy firm, said there had been inadequate disclosure about a possible joint venture between a Fonterra-controlled National Foods, French dairy company Soulieau SAS and its unit Sophet SAS if Fonterra's bid were successful.

National Foods currently has a licensing agreement with Sodiaal to distribute the Sophet brand in Australia.

Fonterra Cooperative Ltd. chief executive Andrew Pelmer said last week that if Fonterra ended up with 100 percent of National Foods it may establish a joint venture in Australia and New Zealand with Sophet.

San Miguel said in its complaint to the takeovers panel that Fonterra had become associates of Fonterra in relation to National Foods and should provide more details about the joint venture.

It also said any National Foods shareholders who had accepted the Fonterra offer without receiving the additional information should be given the right to withdraw their acceptances.

Applications to Australia's Takeovers Panel to require holders or targets to release extra information or alter documentation are a common tactic in hostile takeover battles.

The takeovers panel said it would consider San Miguel's application but had not decided if it would conduct proceedings into the complaint.

San Miguel is expected to say by Thursday whether it will accept or counter its offer for National Foods, whose shares were flat at A$6.26 in afternoon trade in a wider market down 0.1 percent. Reuters

"BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK played an important role in the success of Fisherman's Grill. If not for their SME Business Loans, we would have not been able to grow our family business."

Edwin Tiongson

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK RELATES THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS OF FISHERMAN'S GRILL.

Nothing can stop the Tiongson family from growing their restaurant business — not even fire or the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo.

Fisherman's Grill is the family's pride and joy. Established by Mr. Eddie Tiongson in 1991, this Kapampangan restaurant became the talk of the town for serving dishes that suited the Pinoy palate. All was going well for the Tiongsons until Mt. Pinatubo erupted in 1991. Undeterred, they moved their business to Angeles City where they started their restaurant. This incident didn't dishearten the family. In 1997, Eddie re-opened Fisherman's Grill in San Agustin, Pampanga. Unfortunately, the restaurant was destroyed by fire.

A year later, Fisherman's Grill rose from the ashes. Now, with the help of one son, Eddie re-opened the business again in a 2-storey building in San Fernando, Pampanga and has continued to serve delicious Pinoy favorites to this day.

This would have not been possible without the help of BPI Family Savings Bank's SME Business Loans. Through SME Business Loans, they were able to add a third floor to their existing restaurant. Truly, success doesn't come without pain. But if you have a reliable partner like BPI Family Savings Bank, you'll surely go a long way.

SME Business is FAMILY Business.

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

Donor community urges RP to fast-track reforms

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GLOBAL donor community has encouraged the Philippines to take advantage of the "narrowing" window of opportunity to fast-track reforms that would help reduce the budget deficit.

In a teleconference yesterday, World Bank country director Joachim "Joe" Ansberg said it was the right time to implement reforms due to robust domestic growth and the fresh mandate of the Arroyo administration.

"The economic opportunity created by the high growth of above 6 percent, and by a very favorable international environment, means that difficult reforms are more feasible now because they occur in the context of a growing economy and rising incomes, and are thus less painful than they would be under more adverse circumstances," Mr. Ansberg said in a media briefing after the conference.

He said, however, that the window of opportunity was closing rapidly as the world economy was showing signs of slowing down and interest rates were on the rise.

Ron Ambrosio was in Davos for the two-day Philippine Development Forum, which was conducted yesterday. He co-chaired the forum with Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

The 26th meeting of the Philippine Consultative Group, convened PDF, shifted its focus from a mere pledging session into a participatory forum that included representatives from local government units, legislative and judicial branches, civil society and the private sector.

The PH economy said the donors recognized recent actions taken by the government to solve its fiscal problem. These include rational power tariff adjustments, passage of 'sin' taxes, revenue integrity programs and structural reforms in the energy sector.

"The participants emphasized that aggressive fiscal reforms were the critical prerequisite for growth, since the present level of public debt and debt service limits development spending and represent a key source of vulnerability," Ron Ambrosio said.

He said the participants considered as "essential" the passage of a "high quality" value added tax (VAT) bill that would increase the rate and keep administration simple.

But he noted that there was a prevailing view that additional measures still needed to be put in place to reduce the deficit and fund the developmental priorities of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

"These efforts would include further tax measures, improvement in tax administration and possibly a fiscal responsibility act," Mr. Ambrosio said.

During the meeting, Ann Ansberg said a member of the official development assistance (ODA) partners indicated their willingness to go beyond current programs and consider "substantial, higher financial commitments." "If and when the country establishes a track record of significant and sustained fiscal reform and fiscal improvements, including the government's intention to cost-perform on its fiscal targets and from fiscal to fiscal reform of form."

GMA 7 shelves IPO . . .

(From page B1)

are satisfactorily resolved."

"The network will try to work out a solution that will be in the best interest of the company," the company said in a statement.

Part of the listing plan is a secondary offering that would dilute the ownership of the major shareholders but would keep them in control.

The Jimenez family had been reportedly trying to sell its stake in GMA after the Cojuangcos and the Ibarras took over the operations and management of the network a couple of years ago.

Last year, the Jimenez family was reported to be selling its stake to Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

GMA's former president and chief executive officer Gilberto Antonio Jr. relinquished his post in his brother in-law Felipe Gozon following a botched deal with PLDT in 2000, Gozon's sister is married to Jimenez.

PLDT's bid to acquire a controlling stake in GMA failed to materialize due to pricing and valuation differences.

Gozon said in May last year that he was open to the possibility of acquiring Jimenez's 35-percent stake in GMA.

But the telecom executive has reportedly shifted his interest to either Channel 11 or Channel 9. Gozon and Pangilinan might join forces with El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde in key stakes of the two organization's TV stations.

CAROLINA Bamboo Garden

Can bamboo save RP?

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

IN THE hills of Antipolo City overlooking Metro Manila, in Barangay San José near Peace Mountain, lies the Carolina Bamboo Garden. As its name indicates, the farm propagates and promotes bamboo: a pet to rebuild; graceful, pliant and resilient like the Filipino people, with a unsurpassed of uses, business opportunities and, yes, with a potential even for improving the economy.

The garden is a project of the Mapua Foundation Inc., founded by Carolina G. Jimenez.

Opportunities

"I want more people to go into bamboo," says Jimenez, "It grows on wet ground, has so many uses and doesn't need any maintenance. A swaying gentle rug sound (And the sound is nice), like chimes."

She adds, "I have this waiting list (of buyers) but I don't want to go commercial yet. There's a lot of money in it. You can really be a bamboo entrepreneur. There's a big demand for bamboo. My list buyer and brokers have."

Bamboo can be planted in your backyard.

Going into the business

First of all, Jimenez suggests, cultivate a piece of land with water. Then buy seedlings, grow for four years at least, and create a nursery.

There are so many kinds of bamboo, like bayog, bolo, Buddha's belly, bulog, kawayan tinik, calibuan, variegated and yellow bamboo. And the uses are a plenty: to address soil erosion, for processing into pulp and paper, furniture and construction, innovative sculptures like the works of artist Francisco M. Mirano, ornaments, pointing poles and scaffolding utensils and handicrafts.

And fishing rods, toys, walking sticks, ski poles, handles for umbrella and fans, pack landscaping, badges, ornamental material for buildings and fences, and to form timber with or without lamination. And that's not a complete list. Think of the Las Piñas Bamboo Organ. The young shoots are edible, and can pickle after cooking.

Rare review

Governor Odette Alcantara of Mother Earth Philippines gives bamboo a rave review. "The integrity and purity of bamboo is awe-inspiring. It might as well be our portrait as a people. Where there are bamboo, especially along the river banks, the air is fresh. It can give you shelter, music (Dangdan Kawayan), dances (Tinikling and Singkil)... The farmer and his carabao take a quality rest under its shade."

She adds: "Bamboo is not only food for a thirsty soul, a hungry mouth but for our underconsumed bodies as well. Who says we are a poor country? Bamboo can save the country."

"THERE'S a lot of money in it (bamboo)."

Stocks end lower on profit-taking

quoting some of their holdings to pay for subscriptions for the initial public offerings of Manila Water and SM Investments.

Losers outnumbered gainers 57 to 39, with 68 issues unchanged.

A leading insurance Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which also led the market rise in recent days after posting a record P26.3-billion earnings in 2007, dropped 1.37 percent to close at P1,465. AP

THE BEST JUST GOT BETTER!
Simply the most recommended accounting software for SME's
Used by More Than 400,000 Businesses Worldwide!
Order now and complete your accounting system with a FREE Payroll Pro software
MUSTARD Seed SYSTEMS CORPORATION

MSI PAYROLL
A smarter, FAST, COMPLETE and ACCURATE computation of payroll and generation of government reports and remittances
METROSOFT, INC.

The Right Audiovisual System Integration for perfect presentations
EIKI TOSHIBA CRESTRON JCOM Sanha
Whether it be for sales or rental of world famous Audiovisual equipment, or the design, installation and integration of Audiovisual systems for Boardroom, Conference room, Training room, Command center, Auditorium, Entertainment center or Home theatre, we have the right mix of equipment, accessories, manpower and technical know-how to satisfy your kind of need.
Call us. We'll be pleased to work out the scheme that best suits your need.
AV DESIGN SYSTEM INTEGRATION SALES RENTALS
BRAIN

BURGLARIES? LAZY EMPLOYEES? DISHONEST STAFF? INSIDE JOBS? DON'T BE THE NEXT VICTIM!
Protect your company's integrity and assets with HOWARD
yutiam

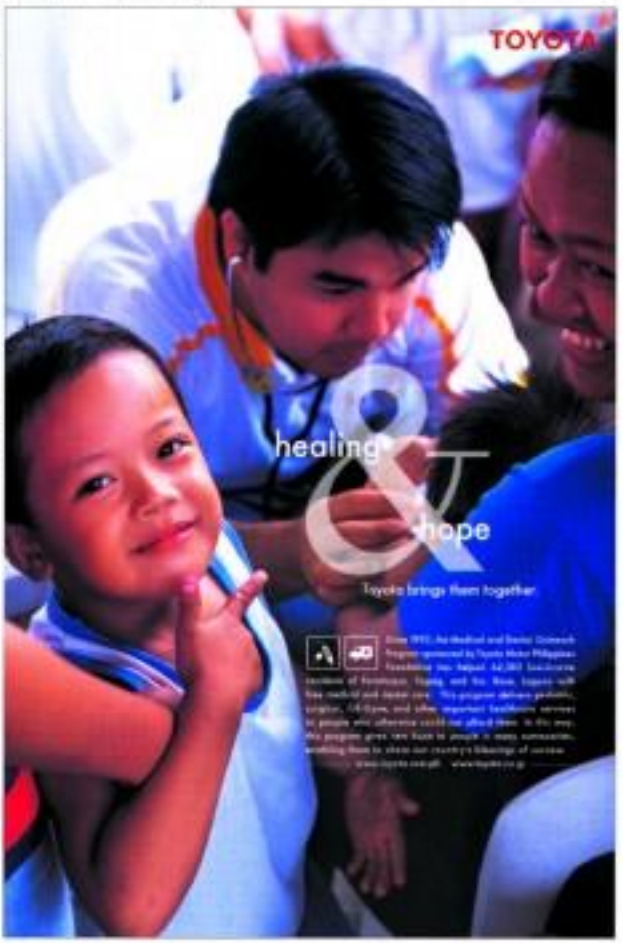
DOUBLE CHECK DIABETES
PRESTIGE GLUCOSE METER
FAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

FRANCHISE SEMINAR
Saturday, March 15, 2008 - 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.
FK FRANCHISE CONSULTANCY (02) 913-2665 / 913-2673

PSBank US$ Dollar TIME DEPOSIT
Earn as high as 3.5%

	$1,000 to $9,999	$10,000 to $49,999	$50,000 & up
1 month	2.500%	2.750%	3.000%
2 months	2.625%	2.875%	3.125%
3 months	2.875%	3.125%	3.375%
6 months	3.125%	3.125%	3.375%
12 months	3.250%	3.500%	3.500%

Visit any of our 139 PSBank Branches nationwide.



Bank eyes P16B from rights offer

Tanduay to buy 6 liquor firms

By Elizabeth L. Sánchez

LIQUOR firm Tanduay Holdings Inc. (Tanduay) of the Lucio Tan group is setting aside P5 billion to buy six companies engaging in the distribution and manufacture of liquor and alcohol.

The acquisitions are seen to enhance the value of the chain distributor and make it more attractive to prospective investors, said sources close to the company.

According to the sources, once the acquisitions positive through in the second half of the year and the assets of its target companies are folded in, Tanduay's assets will expand to nearly P16 billion from the present P7.3 billion.

Tanduay is still studying its options in financing the planned acquisitions.

In a disclosure yesterday, Tanduay said its board approved the acquisition of the six firms.

Emilio Ponsica, Tanduay corporate secretary, said management was currently negotiating "for the best terms and conditions, including tax cash" in purchasing the following companies: Asian Alcohol Corp., Alcohol Chemicals Inc., Ingham Distillery Inc., Cebuana Packaging Corp., Phil. de Cullo Shipping Inc. and Negros General Services.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE METROBANK Bank and Trust Co., the country's biggest bank, yesterday said it could raise over P16 billion in gross proceeds from the offering of new shares to stockholders.

The bank also announced that the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas had approved the stock rights offering.

The bank hopes to complete the rights offering within the second quarter.

In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the bank said it expected gross proceeds of at least P15.5 billion and as much as P16.5 billion from its stock rights offering.

Net proceeds were estimated in range between P5.4 billion and P16.34 billion after deducting the expenses estimated at one percent of the total proceeds.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura welcomed Metrobank's plan and said it augured well for the banking industry.

"This is a sign of confidence in the economy," Buenaventura said. "We look forward to more banks undertaking similar fund-raising activities to take advantage of the improving business climate."

The issuance was proposed in order to beef up Metrobank's capital base and strengthen its balance sheet.

The bank said the proceeds would be used to "optimize funding risk to enhance profitability, support asset/space/loan growth, and increase provisioning levels."

Its board of directors had authorized the issuance of up to 350 million shares of the authorized but unissued capital stock of the bank.

In its letter to the SEC Metrobank said its board had authorized its president, Antonio S. Abacan Jr., to determine the issue price. It will be based on a 0 to 20 percent discount to either the closing price on the trading day preceding the pricing date or the weighted average price of the shares in the last ten trading days preceding the pricing date.

Abacan was also authorized to fix the record date to determine the stockholders entitled to subscribe to the additional issues of the listing and other regulatory requirements associated.

Metrobank earlier reported a 28.2 percent increase in consolidated net income of P3.413 billion in 2004 over P2.66 billion a year ago.

The bank said the growth signaled "better prospects for the bank, given rising interest rates, its strong franchise in the upper and middle market, as well as its leadership position in the consumer business and trust accounts."

The bank's investment house subsidiary, First Metro Investment Corp., will underwrite the offering.

Metrobank has an authorized capital of 2.5 billion shares, of which 1,431 billion are issued and outstanding. With the additional issuance, the bank said the number of outstanding shares would go down to 0.6.34 million.

Metrobank is controlled by Lucio Tan group. Its arm also has interests in real estate, car manufacturing and retailing, investment banking, power generation and construction.

PHILIPPINE
NTF2005
National Trade Fair
The Pride of the Regions
9 - 13 March 2005
MEGAWALL
Megatrade Hall
Visit the Philippines' one-stop platform for SMEs and feast your senses on the country's best SME products from furniture and home décor to unique fashion accessories and sumptuous native delicacies.
National Trade Fair brings together over 300 companies from the 17 regions of the country. The show also offers a full range of business contacts for buyers and exporters and market info about SMEs – the pride of all regions.
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE EXPOSITIONS AND MISSIONS
VISIT THE OTOP SPECIAL SETTING at the National Trade Fair

Now showing: Family feud on GMA 7

COCKTALES

Victor C. Aganon

UNBRIDGED board room issues between the related Gozon and Stevens families, which could lead to another management shakeup, has prompted GMA 7 to stalemately postpone the network's already delayed initial public offering.

The majority owners of the network wanted to give the public the chance to become shareholders of a company which engages in public service, through the IPO, without losing management control of the company," GMA 7 said in a statement.

The putative P8 billion IPO offering would be on hold "until certain issues between the majority and minority shareholders are satisfactorily resolved."

Despite the corporate veneer of the statement, only three individuals actually control the country's leading television network—chairman/president Felipe Gozon with his 38 percent, his brother-in-law Menardo Jimenez (whose shares he started in December 2003 with an other 30 percent), and former Rep. Gilberto Duavit, controlling the swing 16 percent block.

As late as September 2004, when GMA 7 announced pre-IPO publicity blitz, Gozon remained confident that he would retain control of the network despite a plan for each line to direct proportionately; after all, it was under Gozon's watch that GMA 7 became (and remains) the **unrivaled No. 1 moneymaker: ABS-CBN.**

GMA 7, Gozon said at that time, was planning to offer about 20 to 30 percent of its shares, both locally and through American depository receipts.

"We will have at least 10+1 percent stake [post-IPO]," Gozon was quoted as saying. "I will not lose control of the company."

"If I were Manila shareous, I'd be very happy and ecstatic, because the market value of the whole company and his stocks have now doubled under my administration," he smiled.

Though he has kept himself inaccessible to the media, Jimenez has been busy at completing to his client friends about his sudden fall from grace.

To keep himself busy sweeping after his ouster, Jimenez joined Channel 5 owner Antonio Cojuangco Jr. and former SEC Commissioner Gildelia Pamintuan to establish a network of owners anchored on pay media to select areas nationwide. That venture has yet to meet shareholder expectations.

Despite having resigned from the GMA 7 board, Jimenez, who is married to a sister of Gozon, still seems to push through with the IPO, but apparently under certain conditions.

According to the grapevine, the two Jimenez children in the board, Lance Jimenez Marshall and Joel Marcelo Jimenez, submitted a list of shareholder demands in the last board meeting, prompting their chairman uncle, who was said to have been appointed by the last minute change of mind, to indefinitely suspend the listing.

Money-go-round

▲ MANCPI, V Pangilinan acquired another 1,000 shares of PLDT, boosting his total investment in the company he chairs to 93,874 shares, at yesterday's close of P1,401 a share, that blue-chip stock was worth over P1.33 million.

▲ MICROSOFT magnate Jose Luis "Bobot" Yap has just been named Page 88(+) Fund board member by Securities Specialists Cantos.

▲ FRUEHOFF developer JMG Holdings also chair Isidro Ginzon yesterday left for London and Milan to establish sales offices in these cities, which have many Filipino overseas workers.

Heard through the grapevine

IN ADDITION to another subdivision, Rockwell later this year plans to start construction of a cluster of villas and a resort club, this time in the scenic hotspot of Batangas.

Email: sorbales_pbl@hotmail.net or sorbales_pbl@yahoo.com

Tanduay . . .

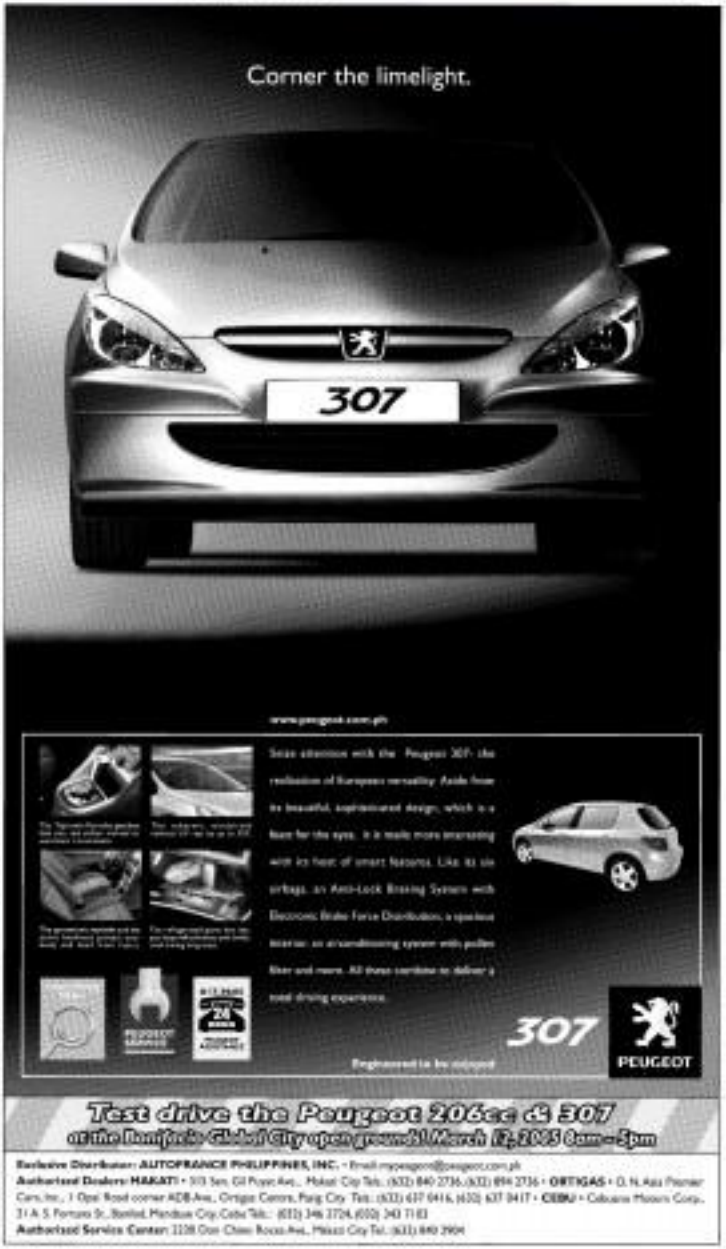
From page B4

According to sources, most of the firms are owned partly by companies linked to the Go-Ong family.

At present Tanduay has its distillery, it buys alcohol from some of those firms through its 100-percent subsidiary Tanduay Distillers Inc.

Asian Alcohol, based in Negros Occidental, is the country's second largest distillery. It has an authorized capital of P60 million. Absolute Chemicals Inc., based in Cam, Batangas, has an authorized capital of P60 million. It manufactures, exports, buys and sells chemicals.

Tanduay Distillery presently has no operations and is based also in Cam Batangas.



Korean group eyes PNOC-EC's Malampaya stake

A CONSORTIUM OF major South Korean players in global and regional energy industry is interested in acquiring 49 percent of the 19-percent stake in Malampaya gas field of PNOC-Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC).

PNOC-EC president and chief executive officer Eduardo Medalao said he believed that the South Korean group, led by LG International, "is determined to pursue its acquisition of the PNOC-EC interest."

He said that if the deal pushed through, it would be a welcome development.

Medalao earlier said PNOC-EC was close to completing its partial divestment in the Malampaya project, noting that "only a few steps remain to be done to close an old privatization process."

The consortium, with a combined capitalization of close to $5.2 billion, is composed of LG International, the Korea Gas Corp. (Kogas), Seoul City Gas Corp., and the Samsung Group.

LG has major interests in several large-scale energy development projects in Oman, Qatar, Vietnam, Irkutsk and East Siberia. With a market capitalization of $567 million, it reported sales of close to $2 billion and net profits of $94 million in 2002.

Kogas is reportedly the biggest importer of liquefied petroleum gas in the world today. With a market capitalization of $2.4 billion, it is the South Korean government's monopoly producer and supplier of natural gas in that country. It reported sales of $7 billion and net profit of $200 million in 2002. It also has investments in Qatar's RasGas and in the LNG business in Oman.

Seoul City Gas Corp. has capital of $100 million and owns some 2,000 kilometers of distribution pipeline network that serves 3 million people in Seoul's western area and three other cities. Daewoog, capitalized at $100 million, has investments in petroleum gas projects, power plants, industrial gas construction, electronics and leisure.

An LG group official earlier said the post-Sin acquisition by the group of a portion of PNOC-EC's Malampaya interest "will open the door for the expanded cooperation between the Philippines and South Korea in the field of power and energy."

Medalao said the group's sale landed "the transparency of the process involved in the privatization" of PNOC-EC's stake." Even if the rules and procedures were oftentimes seen as too stringent, this resulted in giving positive signals to international investors like us that the Philippines wants this deal done with credibility."

The long process sometimes challenged our patience but we understood clearly why the Philippine government had to maintain its caution and prudence, he added.

The Malampaya oil and natural gas exploration and development project is the largest infrastructure project in the country. Some $2 billion have reportedly been invested in the upstream side of the project, and another $1.3 billion in power generation facilities that utilize the natural gas generated by the project.

Malampaya currently supplies some 30 percent of the overall power requirement of the Luzon grid.

PGMA VISITS ePLDT VENTUS IN ILOILO
President Macapagal-Arroyo recently toured the facilities of ePLDT Ventus Inc. in Iloilo, the first ePLDT call center outside Metro Manila with an initial 300-seat capacity. She is shown here applauding the presentation of PLDT senior vice president for call center business Rizalde Mercenaige (center) who briefed the President on how the PLDT Group plans to make Iloilo one of the country's call center hubs. Looking on is ePLDT Ventus Business Development director Ray Brian P. Lamaan.

US fund buys PLDT shares

By Clarissa S. Batino

FIDELITY investments, the world's largest mutual fund, recently acquired 5.13 percent of the outstanding stocks of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (for $64 million.

The acquisitions were made through Fidelity Investments' wholly owned units FMR Corp. and Fidelity International Ltd.

The two fund management units informed the stock exchange that they were open to the possibility of making additional investments in PLDT in the future.

FMR and Fidelity clarified that the acquisition was not intended to take over controlling interest in the company.

PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno said, echoed this development saying, " this is good for the company because Fidelity is one of the largest funds in world. The increase in their investments in PLDT affirms their positive outlook on the company."

FMR Corp. and Fidelity held a total of 6.72 million shares or 5.13 percent of the 130.24 million issued stocks of PLDT. FMR Corp., a non-bid services corporation, owns 5.119 million shares or 3.84 percent while Fidelity International accounts for 2.54 million shares or 1.49 percent.

Shares acquired were in the form of common shares and American Depositary Receipts or ADRs.

"FMR Corp. and Fidelity may subject to market conditions, make additional investments in or dispositions of securities of PLDT in the future, including additional purchases of ordinary shares," Fidelity told the stock exchange in a letter dated March 3.

Nazareno said big fund managers like Fidelity were known to be long-term investors.

On March 4, PLDT share Manuel Pangilinan bought another 1,000 shares of the telecom giant at P1,460 each. He now has 99,874 shares.

Pangilinan said PLDT's share price could still go up given that "that its price earning ratio of almost 10 times its 2002 performance ratio still lower compared with those of other companies in the region.

"PLDT's PE ratio is quite low compared with its regional peers' of about 14 times. There is still room for growth in terms of share price," the PLDT chair said during last week's briefing on the company's 2002 performance.

PLDT shares closed lower at P1,482 yesterday against P1,490 last Monday.

Pangilinan said next year's dividends may double to 20 percent of this year's net profit. He said the group's net income should hit P27 billion this year.

PLDT's net profit in 2000 of P23.17 billion surpassed its twice-upgraded profit target of P20 billion and was 227 percent higher than an adjusted 2000 income of P7.5 billion.

"I would like to think that we will achieve something like P27 billion by 2005," said the PLDT chair.

Last year's relatively smooth peso-dollar rate reduced the group's foreign exchange losses to P2.7 billion against P9 billion in losses in 2001.

SPI acquires India-Based medical transcription firm

SPI Technologies Inc., a company founded in the Philippines and is now one of the world's leading content outsourcing service providers, announced the signing of an agreement to acquire India-based IG Information Services and Technologies Private Limited's medical transcription business (IGMT).

The acquisition IGMT will enable SPI to quickly expand its delivery capacity to meet ever-increasing demand for medical transcription services by US healthcare providers. The terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

"Providing medical transcription and other healthcare information management services is one of SPI's fastest growing lines of business," said Jerome Gu, president and CEO of SPI Technologies.

"The IGMT acquisition gives us state-of-the-art facilities in India with a capacity of more than 600 employees to complement our medical transcription operations in the US and the Philippines."

IGMT is located in Coimbatore, the second largest city in Southern India after Chennai and considered the education center of the region.

"The acquisition of IGMT broadens our presence in the country, adding to our current staff complement of nearly 1,000 across the cities of Chennai, Bindhenry, Kolkata and New Delhi. SPI Technologies is committed to building a greater presence in India and maximizing our leadership role as global business process outsourcing," said Gu.

Robert Cabales, president and COO of SPI Healthcare Transformation, the healthcare division of SPI Technologies, said "IGMT is an excellent fit for SPI.

Germans set up P803-M fund for SME development

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Finance Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A German financial institution has set up a development fund worth 11 million euros or about P803 million, which will be used to finance micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Negros Occidental, Cebu and Leyte.

This was disclosed Monday by Danish Bernstein, senior advisor for Financial Services of Orchimdl and Medium Enterprise Development for Sustainable Employment Program (SMEDSEP), a Philippine-German development cooperation project.

He said in an interview that the facilities would be channeled through rural banks in the pilot areas.

SMEDSEP fund would be available to Negros Occidental starting June, through seven member banks of the Negros Occidental Federation of Rural Banks Inc.

"Applications for loans, which could go as high as P2 million can be made now," Bernstein said.

He said SMEDSEP was set to determine the interest rate on the loan, but assured the public that it would be lower than that of commercial banks.

The German instructor focused on SME development as there itself is a economy here the backbone of the local economy, thus, must get easier access to loans to grow their business.

"The SMMEs are struggling with a multitude of economic-policy, legal and bureaucratic obstacles," he said.

He said these include installation access to markets, promotional measures, business services, training programs as well as financial and credit services.

"This promoted businesses from taking their entrepreneurial capacities to the full," he said.

Bernstein said the SMEDSEP's goal was to create favorable business conditions in the Visayas for MSMEs with growth potential.

Funding for the Asea will come from the German Development Bank—Kredit fur Wiederaufbau (Credit for Reconstruction and Development)—who channeled through the SMEDSEP.

The GMEDSEP is implementing the program with the help of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, Department of Trade and Industry and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

15 used cars seized in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Fifteen imported used vehicles from Japan worth P384 million were seized here recently in the latest anti-smuggling operation of the Task Force Subic and Bureau of Customs officials.

Seized due to unreflected importation documents were 14 used utility vehicles and an F3 racing car headed to five customer vans, which were abandoned at the former Hanjin Export Depot (HED) here.

John Colombo, task force chief, said two container vans, each of which contained two sub-par vehicles, instead had four cars each.

He said two other containers were declared to contain a trolley van were loaded with three cars each.

Another container was declared to contain only used automotive parts worth $2,000 (P100,000) was discovered to be loaded with a Japanese racing car valued at $7 million (P384.7 million).

The 14 used utility vehicles were estimated to cost about P13 million.

The racing car, which was consigned to Miguel Ramirez, registered owner of Sports Subaru Inc., a licensee here, was the biggest haul on the since the task force was formed late last year.

The racing car was shipped from Gotemba City in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, and arrived here on Feb. 20.

Colombo said the two container vans containing six of the seized utility vans from Japan were consigned to Global International (Subic) Philippines Inc.

The eight other seized vehicles were Hyundai sedans from South Korea.

Customs Deputy Commissioner Lito Rimple, who joined the task force in opening the vans, said their move was "a signal to people who are involved in smuggling activities."

"We are going after those people who are committing all forms of smuggling," he said.

Colombo said six cases against 15 people, mostly Subic boatmen, were already filed in court, while five others are under investigation. Andrei Asuncion and Allen Menchaca, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Milkfish processing plant opens

By Felipe V. Calleo
PDI Finance Bureau

ROXAS CITY—A pioneering banger milkfish deboning and seafood processing plant recently started operations here.

The plant inaugurated by President Macapagal-Arroyo is the first of its kind in the country, and was funded by a P19.7 million loan from the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund.

ACEF is a special purpose fund to help the agricultural sector become globally competitive.

The plant owned by JC King Enterprises plans to produce 15 tons of boneless milkfish a month to meet the growing demand for processed value-added seafood products here and abroad.

Gov. Vicente Bermejo said the seafood plant would create jobs, push the local economy forward progress, and improve the lives of Capiznons.

Bermejo said Dapia, a major producer of milkfish, could produce over 25,000 metric tons a year.

Capiz boasts of having the biggest areas of developed swampy mangroves and brackish water areas more suitable for milkfish culture.

The Governor, together with Sen. Mar Roxas and some of her Cabinet secretaries, were recently in Capiz, the "Seafood Capital of the Philippines," to also launch the Governor Walter Umali, Price Watch Board and "Silahan ng Bayan" as well as to monitor the prices of basic commodities at the province's private markets, the Southern Arizona Trade Center (SATC).

Chikka offers new services

CHIKKA Asia, provider of enhanced mobile messaging services, has expanded its suite of products to include voice content.

Under his Audio Content Delivery Platform, Chikka will provide services such as artist celebrity voice calls to fans, and inspirational words as ringback tones.

"Once again, Chikka sets the trend in mobile infotainment and entertainment," said Mikey Garcerilla, director for product development for Chikka Asia.

Chikka pioneered a subscription-based celebrity texting service in 2003 that became one of the country's biggest mobile SMS services.

Launched by Smart Communications as "Txtstar," the service has since been made available to subscribers in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong through international carriers. MMS and picture messaging services have also since been added to the bigger "Txtstar" bid.

The new voice-based service will be branded by Smart Communications as "StarCaller."

"After only one month, StarCaller has met a very encouraging response from mobile users who are choosing to get real celebrity voice calls, as a subscription basis," Garcerilla said.

As to the actual celebrities, Francois Tanchuling, Chikka co-director for product development said, "The innovation lay in creating synergies between existing technologies. It's all about maximizing what is already there."

The "StarCaller" platform delivers audio-based content including voice recordings, tones, and music via standard voice channels integrated with SMS-based commands.

"We are not certain that the StarCaller platform is a world-first. What we are sure of is that it is the first time voice-based VAS is proving itself as a serious mobile VAS revenue source in a land where text messaging still rules," added Tanchuling.

Chikka Asia is a pioneer in wireless application services development, having created the world's first mobile instant messaging in 2001.

The company has since developed other line-based applications including mobile-initiated (MI) SMS-enabled service alert, mobile-mail forwarding, and mobile versions of Internet Relay Chat.

BUSINESS

PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT FORUM

RP confident it can attain zero-deficit goal

By Michelle V. Remo

GOVERNMENT may be keeping its original target of attaining a zero budget deficit by 2010, but it is actually aiming to close the gap earlier than planned.

"There is an opportunity to accelerate this [attainment of the target]," Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said during the Philippine Development Forum in Davao City yesterday. "We will keep our targets, but we are really aiming to go beyond the numbers."

Finance officials are hoping to wipe out the huge budget deficit as early as 2008.

During the forum, the government also elicited the support of foreign creditors in injecting funds into the country's social fix-it sector.

According to Purisima, foreign creditors, led by the World Bank, have expressed interest in pursuing a fiscal responsibility program for the Philippines.

The program would come in the form of financial support and technical assistance to help the government become more capable in addressing its budget problems.

According to the finance chief, the fiscal target for the medium term still do not take into account the additional revenues to be generated from the legislative and administrative measures that the Arroyo administration is pushing for to put the government's fiscal house in order.

The measures include the reform in the value-added tax system. The executive branch wants an increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent, and to expand the coverage of the tax to include more products and services.

The Lower House has already approved the proposal, but the Senate has expressed fears only on the plans to remove VAT exemption of various products and services.

The government is expecting P95 billion a year from a 2-percentage point increase in the VAT rate, and over P28 billion annually from the plan to expand its coverage.

"If the VAT measure, for example, is passed early enough, then the deficit numbers can drop substantially," he said.

Besides VAT, the executive branch has also initiated administrative programs to raise more revenues.

These include the enhancement of the auditing capabilities of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, and the increase in fees and charges collected by government agencies.

Aside from the zero-budget deficit, the national government also hopes to reduce the deficit of the entire public sector to 3 percent of the gross domestic product within the medium term.

Last year, the consolidated public sector deficit [CPSD], which also includes deficits of state-owned companies and fiscal performance of local government units, was estimated to have reached P203.217 billion, or 3.4 percent of the GDP.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo chokes the hands of (center) ex-Amnesty, World Bank country director while Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Presidential Adviser for Mindanao Jesus Dureza, and Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima look on. Top business and government officials were on hand for the Philippine Development Forum held at the Marco Polo hotel in Davao City

That year, the official CPSD target is P211.532 billion, or 4.8 percent of the GDP.

Purisima said all the precisely that would be collected in 2005 from the administrative and legislative revenue-raising measures would be used to reduce the deficit.

Projects such as an infrastructure, he said, would be financed by the privatization of government assets.

He said the government would strengthen its privatization program. The government would soon form a team within the Department of Finance to focus only on selling government assets.

A new finance undersecretary, Jay Singson, has been tapped by Purisima to head the GOP privatization team.

Once Singson assumes the post, the privatization team will come up with a lineup of government assets to be privatized, and define a revenue target to be generated from the sales, Purisima said.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Tourism
(2003 & 2004)

Sources: Department of Tourism, Medium Term Philippine Development Plan

Although it is growing, the number of tourist arrivals in the Philippines still lags behind that of its Asean neighbors Thailand and Malaysia in attracting visitors. The target is for increased tourist arrivals to 3 million and generate $ 3 billion also in the same year. To meet the economic benefits, another reason cited by the government for promoting tourism is its ability to improve the country's image to the international community.

Marissa D. Torres, PID Research

3-yr T-bond rate drops to 10.5%

BAUSSO with a high level of liquidity, banks swamped the auction for the three-year Treasury bond yesterday, pulling down its rate to only 10.5 percent.

The rate for the three-year Treasury bond was 87.5 basis points lower than the 11.375 percent recorded during its previous auction in November last year.

The domestic capital market showed strong appetite for the three-year debt instrument, as bids for the government security reached P17.3086 billion, or more than double the government's offering of only P6 billion.

"The market is very liquid," said Omar Cruz in his first press briefing as head of the government's Treasury. "It's hard to give a timetable [as to how long the market will stay awash with cash], but certainly we have more than enough liquidity."

The positive response of the market to the government's debt offering yesterday came after the announcement of the January deficit data, which was well within the ceiling set by economic managers.

The national government's budget deficit for the first month of the year stood at only P10.5 billion. The figure was 21 percent better than the average of the P26 billion deficit that the government should achieve for each of the first three months of the year so as not to exceed the deficit ceiling of P77.8 billion for the first quarter.

Cruz said he would also take charge of the government's foreign borrowings after the responsibility was assigned to him by Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

Before he was appointed as undersecretary, Cruz was responsible for domestic borrowings.

Purisima Undersecretary Jun Ricio, who has resigned and will stay on in the DOF only until March 15, was previously in charge of the government's foreign borrowings and privatization of government assets. After he leaves, Purisima is expected to name a new finance undersecretary to take charge of privatizations.

Cruz said that for the meantime, the Treasury would be sticking to the original foreign borrowing of the government. The government has set as borrow $4 billion from the foreign credit market for this year, $1.5 billion of which was already raised during a bond float in January.

Remo earlier said the government was planning to complete the foreign borrowing requirements by doing another bond float either in the middle or second half of the year. Michelle V. Remo

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

Editor: Chelo Banal-Formoso
Chief of Correspondents: Pam Pastor

2b0!'s to-do list before and after graduation

By Miss Mark M. Salon
2b0! Correspondent

GRADUATION is just a breeze away and amid all the exciting processes, every student should realize that there's more to graduation than grandiose gifts and flaunt-worthy grad pics to give away. Here is a checklist of things to accomplish before you don that toga and march to the tune of the graduation song, and suggestions on what to do right after that momentous time in your scholastic life.

Before graduation

• Complete school stuff and don't leave it to your close friends and classmates. Make sure you include everybody in school since you don't know who you'll want to connect with in the future. Aside from contact numbers, the directory should also include other info like birthdays. Now since in the 'in' case may even blossom, who knows.

• If your batch is into technology (who isn't these days?), create an account on Friendster or Yahoo Groups. Apart from staying in touch with just a few mouse clicks, everyone can be updated through posts and pictures.

• Make sure that all your records in school are clean by now. If you still have some projects or pass or obligations to fulfill, do it as soon as possible or you might just end up harassed on graduation day. If you get to graduate on time. (Not to. Make sure that if ever you owe anybody in school anything, fulfill your commitments before the school year ends. Doing so closes the chapter of your life in one more on to a fresh start.

• Any thanks to everyone who made this year fun and fulfilling. Apart from the usual suspects (friends and teachers), don't forget to express gratitude to people who just made your day or helped you in one way while you were studying. That may include the security guard who let you cross when you didn't have an ID, the janitress who made sure nobody entered the comfort room while you were washing your stained skirt, the canteen vendor who gave you a little more serving of food compared to what others were getting, the cute preschool who encouraged you or even that stranger with whom you had a small conversation during transit time. Be one who you never had the chance to talk with again. They made your day nicer or even more than that. How it's time for you to make their day.

• Get back what is yours. Know those who owe you money and make sure they pay you completely before you part ways. Aside or you may never get the chance to claim what is yours again. Check your lockers or your cousin's desk and take home or give away your office supplies and knickknacks. Get the books, bags, clothes, CDs and everything else that your friends, teachers and classmates borrowed from you. Christmas is still months away and you deserve treats. Treat yourself and to others that they not can't take stuff from you and never return them again.

• Do study stuff reserved for your "bukulets." Take more pictures than usual, shop on those monograph books, create more memorable superior thirty-two seconds. Confess. Spend a farewell party at your favorite hangout. Make memories that you can look back, cry and laugh at years tomorrow.

• Figure out what you want to do next. Graduation is not an excuse for any student to be directionless.

If you're graduating from high school, know where and what you want to study and apply now. If you're graduating from college, I hope you've already secured out your resumes. Go ahead and take that well-deserved break, but remember that time is more precious than the ring Dan Cooper denies.

After graduation

• Lighten your life by finally saying goodbye to all those books and school stuff that you'll never use again. Return notebooks and materials to lower batch-es or if you're feeling like Marker Lorenzo, gather all of the used but still usable books, supplies and uniforms of your batch and donate them to public schools.

• Scan diskettes and claim like you will never need again.

• Make a scrapbook of school memories. Gather all those magazines, tickets, receipts, newsletters, movie stubs, yearbooks and whatnot, and go mad with creativity. Create that memory piece which you can flaunt during get-togethers.

• Celebrate. Indulge in a massage, have a haircut or a facial, buy an expensive bottle of fine confectionery or cosmetic-smelling lotion. Eat out, watch a movie and attend a concert. Spend time with family. Cuddle with your significant other. Play with your pet.

• Now that you have a little more time on your hands, do whatever it is that you have always wanted to do but couldn't because of too little time and too many school activities. Take up swimming classes, organize your wardrobe, cover your books with plastic, have all those CDs we go to Singapore. Be ahead of the group yearbook that none can never to be found again.

• Get together with batch mates. Schedule a night after graduation or a year after. Have fun with those people you have spent at least a year with and treasure every second with them, especially now that you're all facing new chapters that will probably take a lot of your time.

• Go back to school or go to work, of course.

UHM, none.—Anne Katrine, 16, graduated from Bloomfield Academy and is planning to take up Education in PNU

BEING independent. And I have learned to be myself. No pretensions.—Paolo Pilapil, 25, graduated from UPHR in 2002

THE VALUE of friendship and the joys of living independently. —Pauline, 22, graduated from UPLB in 2003

2BU! SURVEY

What's the best thing you learned in college?

Text and photos by
Nino Mark M. Sablan
2BU! Correspondent

WE ALL know school is a place for learning. For most of us, it is where we learned about multiplying fractions, constructing grammatically correct sentences and various species of living things.

School is also where we learned about life and the real world: how to deal with difficult people, how to budget money, how to kiss ass or stand up for what we believe in.

Below is a bunch of wise guys who have, thankfully, learned something in school. Apart from the ABC and 1-2-3, that is.

"It takes more than books and brains to survive college and face the challenges of the real world."—**Carlo Lamason, 24, graduated from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in 2001**

"You need to have the right friends to survive." —**Ria, 23, graduated from the University of Perpetual Help Rizal in 2001**

"You don't need to be the top student to prove later on that you learned something." —**Jasmine, 20, graduated from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 2004**

"Faith and diligence are the two most important factors in attaining success in life." —**Meryll, 21, graduated from UPLB in 2004**

"Mediocrity is a fate worse than death!"—**Aisa, 21, graduated from UST in 2004**

"Achievements are no assurance you will get your dream job."—**Rose, 26, graduated from UPHR in 1999**

"College life opens your eyes to the real world." —**Aneth, 23, graduated from Adamson University in 2003**

"The importance of sleep."—**Judith Lacanilao, 29, graduated from Polytechnic University of the Philippines Sta. Mesa in 1997**

"The importance of the Xerox machine."—**Herbie Casimiro, 30, graduated from De la Salle University Dasmariñas in 1996**

"I've learned the pros and cons of being 'affiliated' with my instructor."—**Krsna, 23, graduated from St. Paul College in 2002**

"The importance of financial and time management."—**Mariecar L. Manalo, 28, graduated from UP Diliman in 2000**

"I have learned to become self-reliant especially when exams and deadlines are coming. Also, membership in various organizations has taught me to value the opinion of others and enhance my leadership skills."—**Jana Vicente, 25, graduated from UP Manila in 2001**

IF someone advises you not to drop a course because it would make you a quitter, don't mind him. A 5 mark on the transcript of records would do more harm. And mean people do exist. They are also known as math professors.—**Aly Piamonte, graduated from UPLB in 2000**

HOW to be independent.—**Hannah Calma, 24, graduated from NEU in 2000**

I LEARNED how to party hard and work harder. It showed me that there are different kinds of people in this freaking planet. That you are lucky if you find a true friend. It made me experience the happiest, the loneliest, the most exciting and intoxicating situations life had to offer. That life can be tricky but we are trickier.—**Jamie, 22, graduated from CSB**

THAT college is one of the best things that can happen to your life.—**Honey, 22, graduated from Batangas State University in 2003**

E-mail the author at nmksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

2BU!'S RAVES AND RANTS

Buzz on Neil Gaiman

By Maui V. Reyes
2BU! Correspondent

The stuff we can't seem to stop talking about in the office

RAVES

Rumors of **Neil Gaiman** visiting the Philippines (check out his online journal's archives) has got us buzzing about our fave Gaiman novel. Quick—what's your favorite Sandman book?

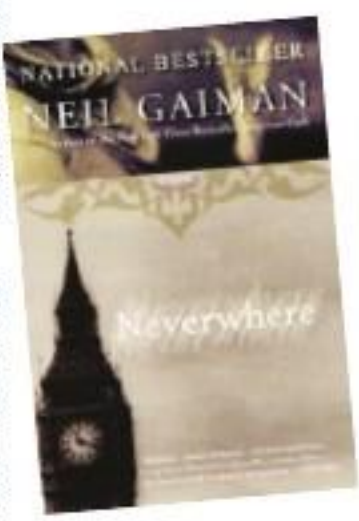
On the lighter side, we're in love with **Penshoppe's Eye Glimmer** stick in **Cosmic**. It's got that hint of peachy-gold-pink, which is perfect for summer.

Rants

Why oh why can't a certain bank in The Podium fix its ATM? It's been dead for four days, and for being the only bank branch at the mall, we'd expected more.

And **bus drivers in the metro** really ought to take a refresher course on driving school.

We're also soooo over musicians who can't seem to shed off their diva attitude. Remember kids, what goes up, must come down.



NEIL Gaiman

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

Think of your unsuccessful interviews and fake exams as practice runs for the ones that will land you that dream job

Guide to job hunting

By Hans Leyvan R. Villarica
INQ7 Contributor

THOUSANDS of articles have claimed to truly help a person in his or her job search. These words of wisdom assert their views on how to make the most attractive resumé, how to behave in interviews, and even how one should handle the likely rejection.

As much as these guides help, they all deal with what to observe and therefore are never truly that helpful. Human resources gurus have yet to define the perfect resumé and neither has it ever been authoritatively written about in any text. How one should conduct himself is largely dependent on how the interviewer conducts his interview, so speculating on that is as precise as any other form of fortune-telling, if not less so.

Indeed, there are only a handful of absolutes concerning job hunting and it would be wise for you, the job hunters, to focus on those. If not for the sake of landing a job, then for the sake of staying sane until then.

Thou shall wait

Job applications are unlike the school applications you encountered in the past. Each has its own timeframe since companies have different screening processes and have varying hiring needs. While one company may ask you to undergo two tests and three interviews, another one may simply screen you through one interview. While some companies may actually have vacant positions that

(continued on C2)

Guide to job hunting

From page C1

need to be filled as soon as possible, other companies continuously screen talents without any assurance that there would be new employees in the very near future. The only thing we can assure is that you will have to wait—for their call, for their decisions, maybe even for nothing.

It would be best for your nerves and continuous sanity, even if you engage in some hobbies, endeavors in the meantime. This time need not be a waste or a burden, in however period. With this in mind, don't hesitate to pursue activities that you have been meaning to do for some time now, which will further develop skills related to your prospective job, will help those around you who are in need, and/or will result in some fun.

For instance, if you are a planning / public relations buff who wants to work in an advertising agency, you may find it helpful to enroll in workshops in digital imaging or advanced lighting techniques. If you were a bibliophile in college, you may finally have enough free time to travel with friends or foreign pliers that you have been longing to visit.

But don't limit yourself to purely selfish pursuits. Take this time to do volunteer work and help some people in need, may they be friends or strangers.

Once you get accepted into a time-consuming job, it may be a couple of years before the opportunity to do any of the aforementioned pursuits it will again. Help yourself and others now.

Thou shalt do lots of chores

As much as this time should be spent pursuing activities that you want to do, it is also a time spent doing what you have to do. Give in to parents chores.

To your parents and to the rest of the world, you are doing nothing. Even if you are able to fill your schedule with some arguably productive engagements, everyone will still assume you are doing nothing especially because you are unemployed. As a result, you will have to do some chores on an unusually frequent basis. What at first would seem like suffering as a few simple requests will eventually turn into a routine comprised of dropping off and fetching your younger sibling, shopping for groceries, paying for various utilities, running to other people's work, and reorganizing the linen closets in your house.

Throughout this painful time, you should never ever argue with those who are asking for these favors from your parents. Instead, you should always follow blindly if need be. Saying no or even hesitating in an act of rebuke that will leave you in a bind that you are a very zealous, grateful bred who is standing up above during this extremely unfortunate scarce period and is not even willing to do some menial errands to ensure. Worse, the obvious will be slapped on your face: "You are jobless!" Running is no easy thing but learning it is an inevitable is something that will truly ease you in life.

It is towards noting that another option is to just fly under the radar so that they never get the opportunity to actually tell you what to do; however, this approach usually just results in the above accumulating and you in duly disappointing the just about your parents.

Thou shalt doubt oneself

Buying this time of uncertainty, you will be especially vulnerable to some judgment. This is inevitable and only natural since you have been exposing yourself and asking not just the companies but also yourself if you are good enough. Your peers will also contribute to this self-induced pity party as some will dump on you for pursuing what in their opinion is a lowly job while others will flaunt their own success at having already secured a high-paying job.

And as Descartes' doubting proved to be productive, so will your new and unsure doubt from the goal at hand, with doubt will prevent you from ever reaching it. If not kept in check, your low expectation and view of yourself will become a self-fulfilling prophecy as you go through your days and answer tests. No one wants to hire anyone with an air of confidence, a low self-image, and a gloomy cloud about him.

In order to keep your eye on the so-called ball, stay optimistic. Think of your accumulated experiences and failed courses as practice runs for the ones that will land you that dream job. Don't allow yourself to indulge in insecurities; rather, as previously suggested, stay active during this time. Even better, continue your job search in spite of the setbacks. After all, the more companies you apply to, the more calls you will receive. Even potential companies interested in hiring you, and the better you will feel and be.

If you are still having low moments when people's many comments, don't spend time with your friends who either pull down your spirits, loosen up and engage in a little harmless schadenfreude. Doing so will make you realize that like those unsolicited voices in your head, the negative feedback you have been getting from your peers are meaningless and are best left ignored.

Thou shalt make a big decision

At some point, you will come to a crossroads where you will either accept the job you've been offered or call it off. In other words, you will get a job offer. In considering whether you should accept or reject it, you should consider the obvious—compensation, job fit, career progression—only as it relates to your final decision factor: whether you can continue to stay prospective job for an extended period of time, or you think a better offer is on the horizon.

In evaluating these decisions, be calm, be objective. In answering the former, review your past experiences in maximizing your strengths and good performance in similar tasks, even if be in your school projects or in some extra-curricular activities. In contemplating the latter, in case you have another pending application, never lose hope. Keep you are in the screening process and how likely you will succeed in offer. If you are merely getting up for your first interview, slow the risk of not getting the job is higher compared to if you have already passed several screening steps. Be aware of your true choices and how comfortable you are with the risks involved.

In the end, making that final decision is still a matter of gut feel. If you feel hesitant, then it may not be the job for you. If you are confident you can get something better, then wait for it. If you are happy with the offer, then congratulate yourself on a job well done.

Ateneo debaters excel

THE ATENEO de Manila University, composed of Ateneo Debate Society (ADS) president Eleanor Uy and political science student Jess Lopez, reached the semi-finals of the 2005 World Universities Debating Championship, hosted by Multimedia University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from Dec. 27 to Jan. 3.

They were the two Asian team standing in the semi-final leg of the tournament, rising above 384 other teams.

It was the largest debate tournament ever held in the world. The tournament was held at the famous landmark, Menara Kuala Lumpur Tower.

Ateneo debated against Cambridge A, Oxford B and Oxford D on the motion that "this house would use gambling as a means to regenerate depressed economic zones." The Ateneo teams were supported by the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company.

After nine grueling preliminary rounds, Ateneo was ranked 17th in the tournament. Breaking into the top 16 is the first in a series of knockout rounds.

Ateneo, along with Cambridge A, the top-seeded team, knocked out Galway A and University of Cork Literary and Historical Society A in the semi-final leg on the motion that "this house believes that it is time for an Asian parliament."

Ateneo and Cambridge A also scored a significant victory in the quarterfinal round on the motion, "this house believes that mentally handicapped people are better cared for in the community than in institutions," against Auckland A and Cambridge B.

In the English as a Second Language category, the Ateneo C team, composed of communication students Glenn Tecson and political science students Shannon Bautista and Jessica Lim, also advanced to the semi-finals.

Lopez ranked 19th among the speakers, while Uy ranked 37th. There were a total of 624 speakers. Lopez was the highest ranked among the Asians.

Earlier, the Ateneo Debate Society won the Asian Championships for the third consecutive time, reached the final series of the World Championships and the Final Four of the Australasian Championships.

The ADS will be returning to the international debate scene in May as defend its home title in the University of Malaya in Malaysia.

2bU ...to be young, to be you, to be free... LIFESTYLE

Jars of Clay shows some love from above

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU Correspondent
Photos by Hugo Pugoy

THE AMERICAN band Jars of Clay recently wowed up two unforgettable performances in Cebu and Manila.

Churning out classic blues rock-pop-jazz such as "Flood," "Five Candles" and "Underneath You," the Christian-inspired rock band gave Filipinos what they had yearned for before: sneaky mischievous good, clean fun and uplifting music, plus a fan's free marriage proposal to his girlfriend of 10 years, right on stage.

"It was great—we really had an amazing time," said frontman Dan Haseltine. "It's always surprising to leave the US and just realize that people know our songs... It's fantastic."

The quartet (minus guitarist Matt Odmark, who had to pull out of the tour for personal reasons) stopped by the Philippines on the middle of their US tour, and the gutsy vocals simply overwhelmed by the hearty response. Haseltine said, "One of my friends back in high school was a Filipino. He was a great, sweet, caring person, and we miss you here and it's just like everybody wants that way. It's really amazing—it's like [it's] part of the culture, and it's a nice change."

Jars' fifth album, eleven:No. 1 radio hits, (three Grammys and) over five million album copies sold—mighty impressive stats for a band that started out in a tiny college campus in Greenville, Illinois.

Mainstream

Jars broke into mainstream consciousness with the phenomenal track, "Flood," which swept the world music public off its feet and breathed new life to diverse genres.

A decade later, Jars of Clay is still riding high on the wave of success, consistently flooding the airwaves with certified chart-busting singles, the most recent of which is the upbeat ditty, "Show You Love."

If you're curious as to where the band got its name, check out Book Second Letters to the Corinthians (4:11).

Keyboardist Charlie Lowell explained: "Jars of Clay' is kind of a metaphor for frailty... We appreciate the brokenness of the world. I think that as humans, we're prone to scenarios and yet we have great need for community and relationship, and that part of the brokenness of this life is being able to rely on each other... where one's weak, another can be strong."

Apparently, the years out the stereotypes haven't stifled the band's creativity, but the guys admit to having had their share of uninspired moments. "Four albs years we'd come back to that place where we have to start writing for another record, and we'd kind of wonder if the well has dried up, if this is all we have," guitarist Steve Mason said. "[But] every time we do that, something comes out of the four of us being together that encourages us even further."

Breaking the mold

Gospel and mainstream, Christian and secular, alternative and acoustic. The differences between these musical categories don't work apart, but as far as Jars fans are concerned, the band draws its appeal from each.

When you talk about Jars of Clay, the word "rock" takes on an entirely different meaning. Solid, steady and unflinching, their music lays weathered the years and even individual quirks, effortlessly earning serious grooves and belch.

Part of their appeal is that the rock elements of their music doesn't have to be about angst and violence. However, the band does acknowledge suffering and sadness as well as joy, but at a deeper, more spiritual level.

"It's a huge privilege to enter into the suffering of a person, to know a person well enough that you can know their story and be a part of it," Haseltine said. "We want people to know that that's a huge part of our impact."

The band has always been upfront about its Christian roots, but as Haseltine put it in another interview, "We don't try to be an evangelical band." Subtly put, they're Christian by faith, not by musical genre.

"So far as the process of making music [goes], our faith forms our perspective...it's the window through which we can see the world," Mason explained. "It pretty much allows us to speak and write about whatever we want. All truth is God's truth."

The band's advocacy is Blindness Water Mission, an organization it founded to raise funds for HIV/AIDS initiatives in Africa. It aims to encourage the bands fans that have in the US to help in the effort.

It's admirable that Jars hasn't gone to their heads. They haven't lost their sense of humor nor their easy rapport with other people.

Despite the serious nature of most of the questions, the guys peppered their professed answers with comedy/one liners.

When asked about their celebrity status, frontman Mason joked, "It still feels weird. We still get up in the morning, put on our pants on one leg at a time..."

Lowell jumped in, "We try not to see it as a compass by any stretch, but it's nice to be validated that way."

The secret to their success? "Dietary supplements," Mason quipped.

But on a serious note, Haseltine said the band keeps busy with the faith and with one another. "I think it has to do with re-upcoming and hooking up each other, and sort of responding to each other that keeps it interesting [and] fresh."

"It's good to be recognized. We love making music [and] we put a lot into the process of trying to be better songwriters, so this is somewhat of the fruits of that labor," Haseltine said excitedly. "We're excited about it, and it's mostly humbling that people recognize what you do."

Jars' seventh endeavor, "Redemption Songs," is due for release on March 22, and fans are clamoring for a follow-up tour sometime soon. Until then, they still always remain the regular down-to-earth guys who just wanted to do some serious karaoke. And on lots of mangoes while they're at it.

E-mail: [redacted]

The Christian-inspired rock band is overwhelmed by the success of its Philippine gig

GUITARIST Steve Mason

FRONTMAN Dan Haseltine

SARI SARI SUMMER 2005. From pareo/paradise to red-hot looks, all the rack and tote your choice

ELLIE BELLE. Joey Mead is our AAM tour based in Singapore.

C-STAR. Gorgeous roomie Georgina Wilson

RAMPOS with swagger. Clara Sevilla in a romantic white

Sex, lies and MMS video

MAGIC DUO. Gaia Lucini and Happy Daniel

STYLES. Bianca Vincio, Denise Albert and some on-his-dad Paola Perales

LOVIN' LANCOME. Sabas Dueñas and Sandra Arnolin at La Escalle Rockwell

TEEM TALK with Anne Bells, Marin Linn, Lara Gabot and Mariel Chua

MIRACLE WHIP. Mindi Bautista, Vicky Belcham, Rica Francisco, Lancome's Sabas Dueñas and Ellen Carmen

FRAGRANT FOUR. Ramon Ortiz-Luis, Cyril Maradeng, Pam Ayuso and Ryan Syrdaklian

I'm super tempted to come up with my own sex video.

It seems like everyone these days has one...it has even surpassed the pareho trend. Everybody wants to be his own bencho in his own video ala Senior Assistance Police Senth.

Technology makes it easy for us to live out our fantasies and indulge in aspiring movements...and I'm talking more than just local immersion here.

While I really have nothing against recording intimate memories, the problem arises when even your important tool [your mobile phone, of course] gets over the hands of the wrong people. Hello, Paris Hilton?

Just recently I lost my mobile phone, and I can just imagine the amount of numbers - from Shamie Gaerlan to Ellen Benitez - that were stored in there. Good thing I had erased all my photos and video.

Ages ago, the issue was JDH (public display of affection). Now it's TOA (technological display of affection—or for that matter, sexual).

The issue has two sides: one, promoting safe dating so that romantic moments should not be recorded at all; the other, insisting that young people in love (or in lust) can express whatever they wish to. Perhaps reaching a middle ground is the best solution.

'I Speak' out

The issue was the topic on ABS-CBN's panel forum show "I Speak" where I was a guest judge recently. I found the show very informative for the Pinoy youth. The raging

Tito Sotto

happened at Don Bosco Institute Mandaluyong. The moderators were really into the discussion. And Bianca Gonzalez looked great.

Finally, an educational and entertaining alternative to all the mind-numbing shows like mga wannabe ala ones. "I Speak" makes us think of real-life issues. Our "Kapamilya" really cared for us.

Or so we thought.

Last week, I found the show replaced by some celebrity-reality-dare show. Yup, another of those celebrity-dare programs. Yawn, yawn. As if there weren't enough programs with pa-sensitive-doing reality stuff. The real "Extra Challenge" issue, sorry! is for TV programs to make us think.

"I Speak" was able to do that...and more. My question to the network's bigwigs: where is it now?

Oscars fizz

I was in the Maldives when the world was going gaga over the Oscars, but a week before that. The Hilo Hotel had their black-tied dinner party to "restore paparazzi-worthy fashion for the city's VIP set amid the Oscars' buzz.

Paano ba 'yan? Still in mall land pero proud! with fast-fast celebrities who arrived in Aquaseo and fully decked out in Bumbac Mabest, fast-fast's chic marketing women, along with their escorts Marvi and Ricky G Ocampo made sure the guests felt red-carpet worthy.

Speaking of sex videos, I happened to bump into one of the fast-fast honchos in my driving seat. We were having our usual tsika-tsika, and all of a sudden he brought up his current video! "You've seen it, I'm sure!" He said with a nakaw-tingin the past minutes.

He seemed mighty proud of it. "So what happened to you after the meeting?" I inquired, curiously reminding him of my visit. "Well, I've become a sex symbol," he quipped—with Hyaluron moisturizing formulations—without batting an eyelash. "And I didn't lose anything, really. There's another version with me and a girl..." he continued with his bedroom story while admiring his own reflection in the mirror. Yup, nothing or wept poor digest.

But I admire his guts to never like Imee Marcos and throw all caution to the wind. Darlene San Juan may be wrong. She said we are a "generation of strippers." I think we are a generation of porn stars.

Manila and Magic

Perfume launches are aplenty. The market for scent-ouvenirs like the number of reality shows this side of town.

And who don't? There bottled fantasies are the closest one can get to stunning beauties—one whiff and worry-is-forsaken kind, no other spirits and yes, free magic!

A couple of weeks back, the media elite flocked to the Enfamer, this time for lunch, to welcome what fashion stallion Enrique Arnaiz had created for the contemporary woman.

The result was Arnaiz Manila Femme, which was launched via a dance performance by Myra Beltran and a musical performance by Arjo Santos. Models sashayed around, spraying the pink-champagne-colored fragrance.

Speaking of pink, Lancôme also unveiled its latest fragrance, Miracle In Rouge, for younger and warmer version of the best-selling Miracle line.

A sinker-than-pink lunch was hosted at Le Soufflé Rockwell that would put Elle Woods to shame.

To cap it off, they ushered a sparkly set of new women who embodied that magical outlook. Among them were actress-to-musician Happy Daniel and triathlete Sandra Arnolin.

Here's to more empowered (and fragrant) women!

Cult of cultos

While we're on the topic of women, so many of them are flocking to Rustan's these days. Yes, it's not to VIP and see's to meet-greet-splits lunched, Joel Tiambeno is single, but that's only the second reason why girls are flocking to our favorite department store.

Cedie Penanes, the design baby of fashion favorite Mindy Hicbet-Tantoco, has been one hot career-domino for trend-setting celebrities

SARI-SARI DISCO FEVER. Red-carpet style at Resorts Utelo's Lounge

A-LIST STYLE. MTV hot babe Anne Manalo

SUR SUP! Raymond and Richard Gutierrez with Hannah and Elenita at the Sun Set party

ETC, ETC... ETC 'n' Then Dhenok (TV host) Colleen Garcia

PINK THREE. Erica Penales, Jane Klopp and Lancome's Zori Chai

Oh my caption!

LAST week as I was swimming in the azure waters of the Maldives, I got a million text messages about my (un)exceptional photos—proof of the paper's wide, wild circulation. Nope, these ladies aren't Kate Torralba and Myrza Gloss (pero allowee kasi nag-text...on a split-test). They are the pretty women (and the 12-year-old boy, Jalen and Mimi Tan-Allen, Cookie Calayan, the former head honcho of Uniwear, is now with Rustans. But the lady above, of course, is Lancôme's designer Cedrice Lopez. Same with cruise-ship singers, eligible tourist finds and exercise-for-birthday celebrator Ricky Delgado. Sienna.

JOAN THE CULTS. Mindy Hicbet-Tantoco's Cultos Femme Summer Sojourn '05, as photographed by Mark Nicdao

Bull's eye for a good buy

By Bianca Consunji
INQ7 Correspondent

HAVE YOU ever been duped by a mouse-talking salesperson into buying a bunch of products you don't really need?

Picture this familiar scene: You walk into a department store, looking for a replacement of the moisturizer that recently ran out. On the way to the counter of your favorite brand, you are waylaid by salespeople holding up bottles of perfume and bikes of the latest lipsticks, eager to spray scents on your wrists and smear color on your skin. One of the displays looks interesting...a new line of products has just been launched, and there is a small table full of testers and a sign inviting you to try the latest items.

You are drawn to the display.

The nice saleslady swoops down on you, analyzing and criticizing your complexion. What are the products you use now, she asks. You name them, and she shakes her head, tsut-tsking "tsk-tsk-tsk."

Her disapproving manner intimidates you, and despite your relatively good diet, you allow yourself to be led to a nearby chair and be smothered with all sorts of concoctions. When you look into the mirror 30 minutes later, you look like a new woman.

Delighted, you ask the salesperson what products have been applied on your face. Ah, the ayes, and examine the new products, from facial wash to eye cream, and relish that you need to take care of your skin more. You look into the mirror again and see new zeros. Her that didn't seem to be there before—you aren't sure when—aged three, and damage on the price of the whole new line of products, but the sight of them worries you, and you agree to purchase them.

Fifteen minutes and several thousands of pesos later, you walk out of the department store, arms laden with bottles that eventually will sit on your dresser, unused and forgotten. You aren't sure if you really need the products, or if the salesperson just wanted to make a sale (as they are supposed to do.) However, it leaves you—the consumer—in a very undesirable place. You are left wondering, "What am I supposed to do?" It's a case of being damned if you do, damned if you don't—buy the products that you might not need and waste your hard-earned bucks, or ignore the salesperson and allow your appearance to suffer.

Fortunately, for Alkiy consumers, there's a way out. Lancôme, one of the top skincare and cosmetics brands, came up with a high-tech system for you to know if you really need a product or not—no sweet talking here. It's recently launched Diagnis Expert, a computer-based program that evaluates your skin and helps you determine what you really need in order to get a better complexion.

The Diagnis Expert makes use of two cameras and three sensors to come up with the most accurate evaluation possible. The first camera, which magnifies your skin to 80 times its size, measures pores and finds spots invisible to the naked eye. The second one, a special infrared camera, takes note of areas that are most likely to form wrinkles.

The first sensor, the Sebumeter, measures the quantity of sebum on your T-zone (forehead, nose and chin) and U-zone (cheeks and chin), while the Corneometer measures the level of moisturization. The last sensor, the Elastometer, measures skin firmness.

I went to the Lancôme counter detailing the diagnosis...I was afraid that the skincare expert would critique at the size of my pores, lack of hydration, dark pigmentation, etc. And I was especially wary of being offered a bunch of products upon seeing the condition of my skin. However, it turned out better than I thought. Maureen, the skincare expert, asked me questions all throughout and explained every step of the procedure. She showed me magnified photos of my skin and told me why it looked the way it did.

Final evaluation? Not as bad as I thought. In fact, by climbing that maybe my skin was not idle (as many girls in a tropical country are apt to do), I wasn't looking it sufficiently...However pointed out that the light moisturizer I was using was insufficient, as it left dry areas. And long hours in front of the computer gave me under-eye circles, almost invisible spots that would darken in time, if not attended to (which made my almost obsessive use of sunscreen useless), as I often neglected to apply it).

So when the 30-minute session ended, I knew what I was doing wrong (so that's why those darn blemishes won't come off!), and what I need. Moreno assured me that I didn't need to purchase anything in a hurry, only to moderate the good habits and get some of the recommended products such as heavier moisturizer and eye cream, which I didn't think I would need for at least five more years.

So it turns out that self-evaluation isn't always correct, skin-deep or otherwise—it never hurts to get another expert to take a long, hard look at you and say exactly what you're doing wrong.

Call 813-3273 or 8-8234636 or visit Lancôme counters.

E-mail: bianca.consunji@yahoo.com

THE EXPERT Diagnis System

LANCÔME'S skin expert Maureen analyzes the author's skin.

OPEN your outfit a dose of drama.

HOT your ordinary chain

TRINKETS galore

FLOWER power

TWO-PIECE basics. Assorted colors for different tastes.

Lilay offers fashion items handmade from indigenous materials

GLAMOR glam

Go local with Lilay!

UNDIES with an attitude

SAY it with panties.

By Kristine Ching
ZBJ Correspondent
Photos by Benny Johnson

SHE, teens from Bangkok, China and Korea are cheap and nice. But there shall now all cute it's not funny anymore.

That's why a group of young entrepreneurs headed by AJ Tagaro decided to go against the bandwagon by sourcing their materials locally. As he explains, "We believe we do not have to look elsewhere to find good quality and stylish but affordable products."

The venture started when sisters AJ and Jen dreamed of having their own store. AJ concentrated on making bags, while Jen ventured into crafting accessories. They felt that showcasing their products in boutiques was a step closer to their goal, but felt that they needed a "cooler and distribution channel."

When they were offered a space at 30th Avenue in Robinson's Galleria, they snapped up the opportunity and opened a store called Lilay. Meaning to share their blessings, they allowed other young entrepreneurs to consign their items.

"We will be able to help other budding entrepreneurs like us evaluate their talents as well. We are also looking for more young entrepreneurs who would like to consign their products with us," says AJ.

THIS bottom will go with any top.

The items they offer are handmade in limited quantities and are exclusively available at Lilay.

Prices are affordable at P150-450 for sarong skirts, P400-500 for clothes (flirty tops, mini skirts, pants), P250-1,000 for bags (in various styles).

Lilay also carries consigned items, also equally inexpensive at P800-1,800 for a set of swimwear, P300-400 for flip flops (plain and embellished), P700 for naughty underwear, P75-300 for faux Albert paper products, and P250 for accessories and layered racer backs.

Lilay is at 30th Avenue, 2/F of Robinson's Galleria.

E-mail: ajtagaro@yahoo.com

CLASSIC charm makes a comeback.

FOUND fashion true to earth are her Thai jackets and friends

BEADED corsages to last you long after prom night, by Alexa Lilangca

PICK two prom outfit. Lucky girl who bought this silver sequinned mini top with taffeta bubble skirt won a surprise gift!

Beautiful house party

Text and photos by Tammy David
ZBJ Correspondent

ONE thing I take about prom season is the weeks of preparation before prom night. Having fittings, shopping for shoes and accessories, not to mention getting all glam and pampered in the public, were royalty treatment for me. I didn't need a reason to feel like a queen. I was ableto re-live my favorite prom memory last 96. I relive the House of Laurel held a pre-party to launch its "Re-Stored Ed" collection.

It was not only a gathering for prom goers and Fab, 34 followers, but also for ladies like mothers and sisters who simply want to feel beautiful. Many flocked to the shop at VE. Loria Street for an afternoon of makeovers, shopping and enjoying some delicious cakes.

The men and women of the House of Laurel headed by designer Raju Laurel were there together with Luncheo makeup specialists Percy Noriatsi, Jasmine Mendiola and Lola Leanel.

Light, billowy jersey gowns and flattering wrap dresses in bright and ethnic shades were on display. There was also the standout "prom uniform" of a beaded corset with matching shawl.

The feminine Barbados Raju Laurel would definitely win some prom swords. There were also charming pastel bubble and tulle sculpted skirts for the romantics who had 96th, 14 marked on their calendars.

There were also bags by Bea Valdes and trinkets by Happy David that were for from your basic gold shell-shaped clutch bag. There was also the pearl-inspire earrings to complete the ensemble. Lavishes added just the right amount of sparkle to complete the ambiance. It gave her make-over and "Michelle so Magic" tube lipsticks to all shoppers.

Shopping, being made sweet and mingling with friends while enjoying awfully delicious cakes are indeed the best combination for a beautiful party. Everyone came out of the store pumped up, carrying the perfect outfit and feeling utterly beautiful.

House of Laurel is at 8813 Villarta St. cor. Manalac, Poblacion, Makati. Call 890-5444 or 890-5446.

MAKEUP artist slash House of Laurel store manager Gala Laurel works her wizardry on the guests with Luncheo Magic.

DOZINGTHER of the house—Raju Laurel

DELECTABLE mermaid gown by Jersey dress with pink drops on gold sheets accents.

BEAUTY fun. Leah Cariaga and Jay Sarkan